FORMER MIDDLEBURY ADMINISTRATOR ESTHER CHARLESTIN LAUNCHES GUBERNATORIAL CAMPAIGN

By MANDY BERGHELA
Local Editor

On the steps of the Vermont statehouse, former Middlebury College employee and Middlebury Union Middle School administrator Esther Charlestin announced the launch of her gubernatorial campaign. Delivering the announcement on Friday, Jan. 5, Charleston became the first Democrat to throw their name in the ring for the 2024 Vermont gubernatorial race.

Burlington mayor Miro Weinberger and State Rep. Caleb Elder, D-Starksboro, have also expressed interest in entering the race, according to VTDigger, but have not launched official campaigns. Incumbent Republican governor Phil Scott is expected to run for a fifth term, but has yet to officially confirm his plans.

"When thinking about the future of Vermont, I do not see a clear picture," Charlestin said in an interview with The Campus. "I have always been super active in the community here in Vermont, and I know that there are a lot of unanswered questions here in the state that need to be addressed, which is why I was motivated to run for governor."

If she succeeds in the gubernatorial race, Charlestin would be only the second female governor of Vermont after Madeleine Kunin, who was first elected to the position in 1985.

Charlestin said she is deeply proud of being a woman running for office and works to promote womens' involvement in policy making as much as possible. She is currently the co-chair of the Vermont Commission on Women, a nonpartisan state government commission that works to advance rights and opportunities for women and girls across the state, according to its website.

ESTHER CHARLESTIN / COURTESY PHOTO
Charlestin came to Vermont in 2019 to work for the college as a residential director. She loved the position as she was able to interact with and support students on a daily basis as they navigated their time at Middlebury.

Charlestin moved to Vermont in 2019 and began working for Middlebury College as a residential director and assistant director of community standards. She described the fulfillment she got from those positions at the college, interacting with and supporting students on a daily basis as they navigated their time at Middlebury.

"I would just love to hang out with the upperclassmen," Charlestin said. "My office was in Allen, but I lived in both Coffrin and Atwater at one time, and it was so nice to watch these folks grow while I was here."

This gubernatorial campaign is not Charlestin's first experience with running for public office. In 2021, she was elected to the Town of Middlebury selectboard.

Charlestin was re-elected to the selectboard in 2022 to serve a three-year term, but ended up being unable to complete the entirety of her term because she could not find housing after her previous lease expired.

Given this experience of struggling to find housing, Charlestin said she would make housing policy a major priority if elected governor. "So many folks cannot afford a place to live, however at the same time, our workforce is shrinking because so many older folks are retiring," she stated. "So many young people will come to Vermont for college, but then leave after. We need more people in the workforce, but people need to be able to afford housing, and how can they do that now?"

Current governor Phil Scott's 2024 State of the State address to the Vermont General Assembly and Vermont citizens also addressed housing concerns. "Due to a lack of housing, and our tax and regulatory policies, rents and purchase prices are far too high, and rising," Scott said at the Jan. 4 address.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic, the affordable housing crisis has become an increasingly pressing issue both in Addison County and in Vermont as a whole. The Addison County housing vacancy rate was 2.4% in 2021, while a 6–8% vacancy rate is considered healthy, according to research done by Rights and Democracy.

Charlestin worked in the Addison County School District as the Dean of Climate & Culture at Middlebury Union Middle School for about a year beginning in the fall of 2022. After experiencing racism while at the school and having a different idea for what the job would entail than the school district, Charlestin resigned in September 2023.

Charlestin received a Bachelor's degree in History and Communications from Western Connecticut State University, along with a Master of Science in Corporate Communications and Public Relations and a Master of Arts in Teaching, both from Sacred Heart University.

Charlestin said she was always encouraged by her parents to prioritize her education, and she now gives her own two children the same encouragement to focus on their studies. She cited the quality of Vermont public schools as a reason she was drawn to move to the state five years ago.

Another issue Charlestin plans to address in her campaign is climate resiliency in the state, especially in the aftermath of last summer's devastating flooding.

"We need to have climate resistant communities," Charlestin said. "Are Vermonters really ready with the current infrastructure if another flood happens? Because it could. This means we really have to confront the reality of climate change."

Charlestin described herself as a Vermonter by choice, something she is very proud of. She added that she believes being a "Vermonter by choice" is something others should be proud of too, particularly given the state's beautiful backdrop.

"The thing I love about Vermont the most is the healing landscape it has," Charlestin said. "We have to confront climate change in order to keep the landscape beautiful."

The only way to make effective change statewide, Charlestin explained, is to make sure everyone has an equal spot at the table.

VERMONT MAPLE SUGAR MAKERS' ASSOCIATION SEEKS STATE FUNDING

THEA VOLPP

By BEN WAGNER
Local Editor

The Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association appeared before the Vermont State Legislature requesting direct funding and support on Friday, Jan. 12. The nonprofit organization aims to promote and protect Vermont's maple sugaring industry, the largest maple industry in the country by a factor of more than two-and-a-half.

Despite being a key industry to Vermont's identity, the association currently receives no funding from the state, whose agricultural agency does not have a single maple-dedicated expert. While the University of Vermont's Extension program, which helps Vermonters apply the work being done by UVM"s researchers to in-state industries and lives, does have one expert on staff to support maple producers, many look to the maple association and its two staff members, as well as UVM's Proctor Maple Research Center for assistance.

State Rep. David Durfee, chair of the Vermont House Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry noted the maple association's concerns about the research center's future given that two long-term staff members, and its top maple expert, have recently retired.

"I think there is a legitimate concern that what expertise remains is being spread too thin, particularly given the growth in the industry," Durfee wrote in an email to The Campus.

Requests like these for funding and support from the state are fairly common in the Vermont system, especially as it enters into the budget-negotiation phase of its legislative session this spring, with the fiscal year ending on June 30, 2024.

"While it's not particularly controversial, the Committee will likely hold off on considering this specific request for the time being and may want to take more testimony later if there is an interest in it," Durfee explained.

The maple agency's request did not ask for a specific monetary amount, but it did seek "long-term" funding. While a one-time provision could be funded using the American Rescue Plan Act funding, the maple association would seek funding from another source in the longer term.

"I think the use of the term 'Long-Term' in this instance may also have been meant to suggest that it might not happen this year, but that it would be useful to begin having a conversation about it now," Durfee wrote.

Previous seasons in Vermont have seen earlier sugaring in response to climate change, as well as a shift in technologies used by sugarers in order to maintain high production levels.

Tim Parsons, the landscape horticulturist at Middlebury college, noted that while research has shown the negative impact of climate change on tree health, he has not noticed any great change in the health of Middlebury's maples during his 18-year tenure.

"In the life of a tree, that's a blink" Parsons said, highlighting the need to focus on larger timescales than his own period of observation.

The maple association's mission is to maintain a thriving maple industry, as well as a working landscape that can be enjoyed by future generations, according to the association's website. This mission statement indicates that funding would not need to be immediate in order to help the association fulfill its goals.

Both Durfee and Parsons noted that the maple sugaring industry in Vermont is a complex one, with elements similar to both the specialty-good product and more typical cash crop industries.

The industry is home to both technologically-advanced commercial maple producers as well as the smaller, local, more traditional sugarmakers often associated with maple sugaring.

While the image of Vermont Maple Syrup remains one of pails hung sparsely in forests, some commercial producers in the industry now manage their stands much like corn fields.

The Proctor Maple Research Center has experimented with a technique in which maple trees are planted in rows much like other cash crops, according to Parsons. Each spring, their tops are cut off, sap is sucked out with vacuum-like contraptions and the trees are allowed to continue to grow for the rest of the year before the process is repeated the following season.

While more research likely needs to be done on more invasive forms of sugaring, Parsons noted that traditional sugaring on a healthy tree is not a major stressor and does not significantly weaken the tree.

Although Vermont's sugaring industry is usually thought of in a bucolic way, it is a major industry with both wholesale and retail components.

"Places are trying to drive profit more, and the best way to get more profits is through retail," Parsons said.

In its dual-style of both wholesale and retail sales, the maple sugar industry may be compared to the wine industry, with some consumers claiming that, like with wine, they can taste the impacts of specific land and climate characteristics in their syrup.

The Vermont maple association is like other trade organizations in that it tries to leverage state and private support to further the goals of its member entities. Although that requires funding for research into maple health and harvesting techniques, it also requires maintaining maple products as quintessential Vermont products.

Durfee noted that sugaring's cultural status will likely help the association in its quest for funding.

Parsons explained that Vermont's maples are used in many processes beyond maple sugaring, including in sourcing hardwoods for goods like furniture and wood chips, such as those used in the college's biomass plant.

"They aren't just researching climate change — also insects and diseases. I mean we will probably always be able to make maple syrup, at least for the next 50 years," Parsons said.

Whether or not the state decides to help fund the association, Vermont's maple sugarers will continue to sugar and seek information to help them thrive in a changing world.

Yoga Equity Project aims to increase BIPOC access at Otter Creek Yoga

By ABEERA RIAZ
Contributing Writer

A local yoga studio launched a Yoga Equity Project in an effort to address the disparities in access to yoga education. The program actively encourages and financially supports Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) in attending yoga classes at the Otter Creek Yoga Studio.

Otter Creek Yoga has been sharing the art of meditation and healing with the Addison County community since 2001, according to its website. California native Joanna Colwell, director and instructor at Otter Creek Yoga, founded the studio after noticing a lack of places to practice yoga in the Middlebury community.

Colwell initially began teaching lessons wherever space was available, often in places like church basements and elementary school gymnasiums. As her base of students grew over time, Colwell opened her first yoga studio at a space in the Marble Works.

With a deep interest in social justice, Colwell aims to lead her studio with a focus on equity, inclusion and justice. Beginning in the fall of 2019, Colwell and fellow Otter Creek Yoga instructor Natasha Chang began developing ideas as to how they could diversify their studio and share the art of yoga with different demographics, Colwell explained.

The pair worked to create the Yoga Equity Project, which launched in 2020 and attempts to make yoga more accessible to communities that have historically faced obstacles to participating in the practice. Classes that are a part of the Yoga Equity Project are taught by BIPOC instructors and open to BIPOC participants in an effort to foster a comfortable environment.

As a part of the Yoga Equity Project, the studio provides paid opportunities for BIPOC students to participate in their yoga classes. BIPOC students are able to receive a $20 stipend for each yoga class they attend, as the project recognizes the need for diversity in yoga spaces and the historical challenges faced by BIPOC communities in accessing wellness programs, according to the Addison Independent.

"You know there is a great big population of humans who can all benefit from postures and breathing practices," Colwell told the Addison Independent in September. "And then you see who actually makes their way into the studios: oftentimes economically comfortable, older, white people."

The studio received an anonymous $25,000 donation during the Covid-19 pandemic through the Vermont Community Foundation, which gave them the initial funding to pay both the instructors and student stipends for the Equity Project, Colwell said. The studio began distributing the stipends for zoom BIPOC yoga sessions during the pandemic, and then transitioned back to in-person instruction when Covid-19 guidelines loosened.

"This amazing person—I have no idea who they are—they got in touch with me during Covid through the Vermont Community Foundation, and they gave us that $25,000 grant," Colwell said.

The following fall, the same anonymous donor provided an additional grant of $40,000, which funded the entirety of the program in 2022. The studio used additional money following the second grant to support the design of a website showcasing the Yoga Equity Project. The website is expected to launch soon, Colwell said.

This past fall, the studio hosted its BIPOC classes every Sunday at 3 p.m., taught by local yoga instructor and massage therapist Sasha Finnell. During the month of January, the studio is hosting a BIPOC class on Tuesdays at 3 p.m. as well as a class open to all on Tuesdays 5:30 p.m.

These classes provide BIPOC students with the opportunity to practice yoga in various forms, from Vinyasa techniques to restorative practices. Some of the classes wrap up with snacks and tea as a final treat, Colwell said.

"The dream is for everyone to have access to these practices," Colwell told The Campus.

She added that the project has been successful in drawing in new students from different backgrounds to the studio. "That works for people to come and bring a friend and come to a different class. And that's really helped our yoga studio too. You know, change the demographic of all of our classes, which is really, really nice," she said.

Laughing River Yoga, a yoga studio located in Burlington, took inspiration from Colwell's Yoga Equity Project to develop a similar program at their studio. Finnell, who often teaches the BIPOC yoga sessions at the Otter Creek Studio also teaches classes at Laughing River Yoga, and has fostered collaboration between the two studios on the equity projects.

Finnell started teaching the BIPOC classes at Otter Creek Yoga two years ago and has taught yoga throughout the state of Vermont for six years.

"As a Black woman who grew up in southern Vermont, I wish these Yoga Equity Projects existed when I was younger," Finnell told The Campus. "The BIPOC affinity spaces have been a great space of healing and connection."

Aparajita Banik '27 has been attending the BIPOC yoga classes at Otter Creek Yoga during the fall semester and J-Term.

"They don't whitewash yoga, they make sure to respect the cultural and religious traditions and acknowledge the Sanskrit," Banik said.

Other students too have found the environment at the classes welcoming and relaxing. Shloka Raghavan '27, recounted the peace she found while practicing.

"During a stressful semester, I found going to yoga very grounding. The instructor's connection with yoga made it very easy to relax and find my own balance," Raghavan said.

Colwell said she hopes to see the Equity Project program continuing for as long as she can find the funding. Her favorite part of this project is seeing students find relaxation through the classes.

"You see people come in and they're kind of tight, and one hour later they come down the hallway after class and it's just like this wave of bliss and peace and giggling coming down the hallway and it's so lovely," Colwell said. "This is the best part of my week, seeing this joy."

LIV, LOVE, LOCAL: SMOKE AND LOLA

Liv, Love, Local is a column highlighting local businesses of Vermont, especially cafés and restaurants in the Middlebury area. Through interviews with owners, I want to highlight the specific successes and challenges that come along with small business ownership in Vermont, the hard work owners and employees put into these businesses, and how these spots serve as places to build community and connection.

By OLIVIA MUELLER
News Editor

Smoke and Lola's opened in Bristol, Vt. on Dec. 9, 2023 as the newest café in town, serving up breakfast, lunch and free soup five days a week.

The café is a collaborative effort between co-owner Abbey LaMay-West and chef and co-owner Wayne Johnson, both Lincoln, Vt. residents. Smoke and Lola's is named after Johnson and LaMay West's dogs, Smoke and Lola, respectively.

Jess Denny, a longtime Bristol resident, serves as the café's general manager, and Johnson's son Skye works in the kitchen, rounding out the team of four.

LaMay-West and Johnson met five years ago and had recently started discussing collaborating on a catering concept. The swift opening of the café came at fortuitous timing when the space at 28 North Street in Bristol opened up this fall after popular bakery Jones the Boy Bake Shop pivoted to a fully wholesale operation in October 2023.

While this is the team's first venture into a café space, all members have years of experience in the hospitality and restaurant industry. LaMay-West has long been involved in management and recently as the owner at Vermont's Own Goods & Gifts in downtown Middlebury. Denny has worked in similar managerial roles for decades, including at nearby Bristol restaurant Cubber's.

Chef Johnson has worked at various restaurants including Haymaker Bun Company, American Flatbread and even in the current Smoke and Lola café space as a baker when it housed the Almost Home bakery until 2020.

According to Vermont zoning laws, the 28 North Street building has been designated for takeout due to the lack of public restrooms. In accordance with these zoning laws, Smoke and Lola's offers a grab-and-go menu of breakfast and lunch bites, along with a selection of pastries and bags of coffee and granola available for retail.

"It's been wonderful," Denny said, reflecting on the community response to the café opening. Denny explained that one challenge the team faced was the fact that they opened in mid-December, welcoming in a pre-holiday rush followed by a typically slower winter period.

"We opened at an interesting time, but we've seen the love and support," she said.

As the team has learned more about community demand, they have adjusted the days and hours they are open. Currently, Smoke and Lola's is open five days a week, from Friday through Tuesday, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. The team aims to eventually expand to be open seven days a week in the future.

"We were trying to bridge the closure gap in town," said Denny.

Smoke and Lola's joins a lineage of local-focused concepts in the same space, including Jones the Boy, Bristol Market and Almost Home, where Johnson previously worked as a baker. Beyond his experience in Vermont's culinary scene, Johnson has spent time cooking in Jamaica and Peru and enjoys experimenting with international cuisines and flavors, which inspire his specials on the Smoke and Lola's menu.

Denny described the menu ideation process with Johnson and LaMay-West as starting with a focus on staple items, such as classic sandwiches, bagels and soups. "From staples, we will build," she said. "[Johnson] just keeps going with all these incredible ideas."

Johnson aims for excellence in every dish. "I really think that feeding people involves a lot of trust," he said. "People don't have to buy food from a restaurant."

Johnson takes pride in creating quality food with a unique twist, letting his creativity come through in rotating specials.

"I'm trying to create an anticipation so that people want to see what's coming next," he explained. "Always making it something just a little bit outside the box, and nothing I do is like everybody else's."

The vindaloo sandwich and the dense meatloaf — sliced paper-thin by Johnson — are two updated comfort foods on the lunch menu.

"I want to do things that are familiar so that people don't feel threatened by the idea, but also different than what their initial expectation is," Johnson said.

Denny added that the menu features gluten free and vegetarian options, including spanakopita as well as apple pie oatmeal.

"The food and coffee is amazing," according to Sarah Kimmel '24, who visited Smoke and Lola's for the first time last week and tried a breakfast sandwich. "[It's] such an adorable new spot."

Another facet of the café's concept is providing free soup. "The accessibility in small towns in Vermont is really important to me," said Johnson.

Denny shared that the free soup initiative was inspired by the work of Wayne's cousin Pat Peters, a former chef at Middlebury College, who has since passed away. Peters was known to make soup and give it away to community members on her days off from work.

Regardless of financial status, anyone is welcome to come in and get a free cup of a rotation of daily soup, limited to one per customer.

"We're hoping to get more awareness of the fact that we're doing it so we get people who are more in need to come in," Johnson said.

Community support from companies like Green Mountain Payments, a South Burlington, Vt.– based merchant credit card company, along with individual community donors has helped Smoke and Lola's fund their soup initiative so far.

Johnson emphasized the fresh, quality ingredients in each batch of soup. "It's all nourishing food and I try to make the soup as good a quality as if I was trying to sell it for six bucks a cup," he said.

COURTESY PHOTO / OLIVIA MUELLER
One important concept at Smoke and Lola's is providing a free cup of a rotation of daily soup free soup to any community member regardless of financial status.

Across the menu, Smoke and Lola's takes a hyper-local approach to ingredient sourcing. Produce and meat are sourced from local farms whenever possible, while the biscuits, naan and sausage are all made in-house.

The chai and chocolate syrups are homemade using Jones the Boy's recipe. Every Friday, the café receives a delivery of Jones the Boy pastries to be sold in addition to Johnson's own baked goods, providing some continuity of products in the space. Jones the Boy owner Ash Allison has assisted in the transition, stepping in to help with tasks such as dialing in the espresso machine.

All drinks the café serves are made in Vermont — coffee beans come from Uncommon Coffee in Essex Junction and cold drink options include Aqua ViTea, made in Middlebury, Vt. and Waterbury–based Chug Water. Of course, the maple syrup Smoke and Lola's uses is also from Vermont, made at Lafayette Farm in Lincoln, Vt.

As longtime Vermont residents, connecting with and supporting the community is an integral part of the café concept. The back area of the café space is already earmarked as a potential setup for a hyper-local market selling products from local makers, which would work to further this goal

"We are trying to do as local as possible. That's one of our biggest models for the space," Denny said.

SARAH SAYS: THE PROBLEM WITH TOSSING OUT THE LITERARY CANON

Op-Ed

Sarah Miller *is a member of the class of 2024 and an Editor At-Large for The Campus.*

On a semi-weekly basis, Sarah Miller shares her thoughts on culture and campus life.

Skiles Roberts-Salvador

In March of my senior year of high school, I told my best friend that I couldn't wait to be at an institution where more people had read Tolstoy's "Anna Karenina," a text that at the time struck me as the apex of literary pretension. Thankfully she laughed in my face. Yet I remained committed to this ideal of the elevated text with a seriousness that was not infringed by my usual eighteen-year-old cynicism or the fact that I had yet to read "Anna Karenina".

A few weeks later, when the Covid-19 lockdown left me with an abundance of spare time, I had the chance to sop up Anna's passion for Vronsky between paging through Levin's tedious introspections. At the time, I considered reading such a book a testament to intellectual discipline and preparation for the work I would soon undergo as an English major. Nearly four years later, I am happy to say I have read "Anna Karenina," a book I recommend to anyone with patience and a passionate heart. Now I see my devotion to this behemoth of the literary canon as charmingly out of step with the current state of affairs in English.

By the time I arrived at Middlebury, I was anxious about all the "great books" I neglected to study and felt desperate to catch up. But the prevailing attitude against the canon remained trenchant. Why did I, an intersectional feminist, want to waste my time on the works of dead, white men?

In the decades since legendary critic Harold Bloom released his prescriptive list of works that make up the "Western Canon," a byword which should now prime any undergrad with dread, the pulse of the literary world has shifted. Much of this change is for the better. Bloom's list was dismissive of women, writers of color and most non-English written work. The critic himself has been reexamined within our culture's evolving understanding of consent. Modern audiences have granted more legitimacy to the charges of sexual misconduct filed by students while Bloom was a professor at Yale University.

Thanks to the academy's reappraisal of the canon, we are now more inclined to highlight the work of marginalized authors who have been excluded from proper literary study for far too long. I, for one, never felt wholly seen by a work of art until I read Zadie Smith's "White Teeth" in ENGL 275 "Multi-Ethnic British Literature," which is one of the few novels in which multi-racial identity is not rendered tragic.

However, this reorientation might come at a fatal cost to the old canon, whose place in American academia now often seems old-fashioned at best and, at worst, prejudiced.

I attended a small, progressive high school that was much like Middlebury in its mission to ground the curriculum in diverse voices and treat its students like independent scholars. Instead of "The Scarlet Letter" we read "Passing." Instead of "Hamlet" we read "Anthony and Cleopatra."

On my own time, I read George Eliot's "Middlemarch," gobbled Jane Austen's works down like candy and luxuriated in Edith Wharton's wicked prose. Dead, white female authors were okay by me while I nursed my grudge against the old masters of the canon. Then, I left for my semester abroad at Trinity College Dublin, perhaps only eclipsed by Oxford and Cambridge in literary reputation, where I took courses on Irish Literature and Chaucer. I found myself thoroughly out-classed. My peers were far more schooled in "the canon," able to proffer points of reference from the Bible and all manner of classic literature in their analysis of the text.

Last spring, as I prepared for fall course registration, I was endowed with an intimidating degree of academic freedom. I had already finished the requirements for the English major and my only requirements left from the college were a science course and one more P.E. credit. So, the only question was how did I want to make the best use of my degree, and what did I still yearn to learn?

I went "full English" — an advanced poetry course, an independent study with my advisor, "Shakespeare's Career" and a Faulkner senior seminar. Before the semester began, I warned my friends to not let me get away with complaining. Finished with my pre-1800 and senior seminar requirements, there was no one but myself to blame for the instruments of my torture.

Yet, to my surprise, the semester comprised the most academically invigorating work of my college career. If not in class, it felt like I lived at Davis Family Library, either between the pages of Faulkner and Shakespeare, or at work on my own poetry and novel. At times the work was grueling, but always deeply rewarding.

Since I was in high school, one of the most pressing questions in English is if we should still read "offensive" work. That we should not read work that is racist, sexist or prejudiced in any other way is one of the main arguments leveled against the canon. If we are to eliminate all work with prejudice we will lose the vast majority of classic literature. There goes Shakespeare, Faulkner, Dickens, Hemingway and even the great stalwart of the high school curriculum, "The Great Gatsby."

I understand the impulse not to read this type of work. It can be uncomfortable and, especially for marginalized students, emotionally taxing to read the virulent evidence of the world's prejudice. But closing our eyes does no more to extinguish the realities of this prejudice than setting the books we disagree with on fire prevents the flourishing of what some lawmakers believe is sexual obscenity.

By no means do I advocate we read the canon the same as we did ten or even two years ago. Essential to the canon's futurity is the ability to criticize it fully. Nearly all of my recent academic papers can be boiled down to one question: Where are the women?

The last few weeks of my Faulkner seminar looked at the work Faulkner inspired: Cormac McCarthy's "Blood Meridian," Flannery O'Connor's "Wise Blood" and Toni Morrison's "Song of Solomon." I had read Morrison for class and pleasure, but until that course, I didn't realize how much her work was in conversation with Faulkner's. By reading her in conjugation in Faulkner, I gained a greater appreciation for both of their canons.

Or, as a Harvard English professor put it, "There's a real misunderstanding that you can come in and say I want to read post-colonial texts — that's the thing I want to study and I have no interest in studying the work of dead white men... If you want to understand Arundhati Roy, or Salman Rushdie, or Zadie Smith, you have to read Dickens. Because one of the great tragedies of the British Empire... is that all those writers read all those books."

The more I study literature, the more I come to realize that writing, like reading, is one conversation spanning countries as well as centuries. Removing any link in the chain depreciates our understanding of all literary work.

In a convocation address, the famous poet Adrienne Rich argued, "Responsibility to yourself means refusing to let others do your thinking, talking, and naming for you; it means learning to respect and use your own brains and instincts."

So by all means, go and hate the canon (I'm not such a Dickens fan myself), but just read it first.

Perhaps the reason I argue so vigorously for the canon is my suspicion that our new resistance is as much founded on anti-intellectualism as modern social concerns. We might protest reading Shakespeare's work because we believe it to be racist, but also because it's difficult. And, in an era in which the English major is already in rapid decline, teachers might fear students won't read Shakespeare and don't want to risk a class premised on Sparknotes talking points.

To that point, I would urge us to trust students more. To trust them with difficult work, challenging work, and even long work.

They might just rise to the occasion.

LOVE FOR THE MIDDLEBURY SNOW BOWL AND FEB TRADITIONS

Op-Ed

Piper Ackermann *is a member of the class of 2023.5.*

Courtesy photo

Feb Class of 2021.5 graduates celebrate their annual tradition at the Snow Bowl.

When I first saw the Snow Bowl, I knew I wanted to apply to Middlebury. I fell in love with the Middlebury Snow Bowl and the adventures to be had before I had even stepped foot on campus. Five years ago, when I eagerly clicked on my acceptance letter, the snowflakes dancing on my computer screen foretold a future where I would proudly wear a cap and gown at the college's iconic ski mountain to culminate my college career with my fellow Febs.

When I learned that Ski Down would not be held at the Snow Bowl this February, I began to fear that Febs have lost our most unique and cherished tradition. As a Feb class, we have endured the turbulence of the pandemic and consistently adjusted our expectations for our time at Middlebury. Through these adjustments we have expanded the descriptors of a Feb and cultivated a more diverse Feb identity. The Ski Down at the Snow Bowl unites us all and might be the only constant for our fabulous Feb class.

In 1971, the college created the February admission program to fill space vacated by students studying abroad. Described by the admissions website as "one of the oldest, largest, and most established mid-year enrollment programs in the country," we have evolved from mere space-fillers to a close-knit community within the college, complete with our own vocabulary — terms like "Febmesters," "Baby Febs" and "Super Seniors" narrate our collegiate journey.

In recent years, we have also begun to identify ourselves as "original Febs" and "fake Febs." These terms were born from the Covid-19 pandemic which led many students to take a semester off from academics and join our Feb class. This year, we are making history as the largest Feb class ever with 233 graduates. To those that we've adopted, thank you for sticking around; we needed you! Regardless of when you matriculated, we are all Febs and will forever have a .5 attached to our graduation year.

When the February admission program began, a celebration for the mid-year graduates didn't exist. It wasn't until the winter of 1986–87 when four Feb women decided they were not members of either the class of 1986 or 1987 — they were the Class of 1986.5. To commemorate their academic journey and bid farewell to the college, they initiated a ceremonial Ski Down at the Snow Bowl. While not an official graduation, the Ski Down has evolved into a quintessential Middlebury tradition for Febs.

The Ski Down at the Snow Bowl seemed appropriate for students that were departing at the coldest time of the year. The tradition quickly became synonymous with Middlebury College itself, gaining national recognition. As a college-owned ski area, the Snow Bowl both increases student access to skiing and solidifies itself as a unique resource for Middlebury student life.

For over three decades, Febs have descended the Snow Bowl by skiing, sledding, snowshoeing and even canoeing, making it an unconventional yet cherished graduation experience. This tradition unites us in a shared goal: supporting each other down the slope and ensuring that every Feb is celebrated. While our February celebration is not officially titled a graduation, as we were invited to participate in an official commencement ceremony in May with the Class of 2023 or the Class of 2024, it is designed to be intimate and memorable. Some cherish the moment they receive Gamaliel Painter's cane, while others hold dear the Ski Down. Regardless, all Febs brave the cold in their caps and gowns together.

This J-Term, several Febs have joined forces to help friends learn how to ski, fervently hoping for a Ski Down at the Snow Bowl. They began learning on the magic carpet and have quickly graduated to riding to the lift. Middlebury provides discounted ski lessons, free transportation and free access to equipment and clothing that many students take advantage of with their additional free time found during J-Term. As Super Seniors, our final weeks in college during J-Term are dedicated to soaking up extra time with friends, crossing off our last bucket list items, and embracing all that Middlebury has to offer — especially skiing at the Snow Bowl.

In December, we received news that the Ski Down would be moved to Chapel Hill. An invitation for our Feb celebration was sent to our families and my parents discovered that my dreams of skiing at the Snow Bowl for graduation would not come true. I categorized the change alongside the many ways that I've adjusted my expectations for my time at Middlebury. We are the last class of students to have matriculated prior to the pandemic. We have adapted to pandemic restrictions, housing shortages, the loss of old traditions and the creation of new ones.

With many changes to our Feb class, we have transitioned away from the stereotypical Feb identity of quirky outdoor enthusiasts. The evolution of the school, and subsequently the Febs, ensured that every Feb held different talents, interests and aspirations worthy of celebration. We have seen our classmates win championships, dance with Riddim, present theses, publish magazines and engage in all aspects of life at Middlebury.

Our collective experience as a Feb class is representative of our variable four or more years at Middlebury. The Ski Down at the Snow Bowl unites our community with the collective hope for everyone's successful descent down the slope. We would come down the slope together in a sea of black caps and gowns, celebrating one of Middlebury's most unique traditions. The college has suggested moving the Ski Down to Chapel Hill to increase the accessibility and inclusivity of the celebration. Instead, additional investments should be made to enhance the accessibility and inclusivity of the Snow Bowl celebration while preserving the rich history of Febs skiing together.

ON THE POLITICIZATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE EMAILS

Editorial

The editorial represents the opinion of the Middlebury Campus Editorial Board.

Following a fall semester spent beset by email after email from the college administration recognizing personal and international tragedies, we have begun to reevaluate the importance of Middlebury's administrative statements to the goals of the college as an academic institution. As we've watched other universities come under fire for various controversies in recent months, there is an imminent need to address the possibility of such attention returning to Middlebury — and what we can do to anticipate that.

While we acknowledge the unique set of challenges facing college administrations, we read these communications as inauthentic and, more importantly, symptomatic of a concerning decline in moral leadership across higher education in the U.S. During this time of unprecedented social tension, we believe that students, faculty and administrators should focus less on the impersonal bureaucracy and more on the rich relationships that define the Middlebury experience.

Some may assume Middlebury — nestled in the Champlain Valley, sheltered by liberal Vermont — is not implicated in wider national trends that challenge the value of universities. Our college's name has not been dragged through the mud in Congress or on online platforms. But these issues can affect any institution, and sooner or later, Middlebury will be forced to acknowledge a diminished value on education as a whole if the recent trends of national backlash to higher education continue.

For college presidents today, the stakes are high, but confidence is low. Americans' confidence in higher education fell to an all-time low of 36% in 2023, nearly half of what it was in 2015, according to Gallup. This decrease is fueled in part by increased public attention to higher education. This fall, as campus divisions deepened with the Israel-Gaza war, pundits, activists and politicians feasted on higher education's weaknesses.

Just take a look at former Harvard President Claudine Gay, who gained national infamy after a disastrous appearance in front of Congress to testify on Harvard's free speech policies while also falling victim to allegations of plagiarism. Or former University of Pennsylvania President Liz Magill, who was ousted in December 2023 by donors, alumni and politicians after backlash to her comments on how to punish those who called for the genocide of Jews. The media spotlight on college presidents pushes a no-confidence narrative and puts intense pressure on them not to slip up as the de facto representative of each institution.

As confidence declines, expectations for college presidents seem to simultaneously be rising. Activists from both sides of the ideological spectrum pressure administrators to endorse their opinions on controversial issues. At Middlebury, liberal students demand the school accept their progressive agenda, which can be at odds with the values of some of our donors. At times it feels as though our administration is cherry picking what controversies to respond to, suggesting that they are motivated by political pressures more so than actual human suffering.

We recognize that when navigating the interests and opinions of different groups, it is impossible for college administrations to take a stance that pleases everyone. Administrators should be expected to uphold academic freedom for faculty and free expression for students, however, even if the discussions are deemed offensive or controversial.

Social polarization and media sensationalism may create a difficult environment for college presidents, but we believe that the real issue is the expanding bureaucracy that incentivizes the school to function as a business, not a place of learning. While we understand that the bureaucracy of academia is in some ways necessary to govern thousands of faculty, staff and employees on campus, such structures disconnect us from the rest of the country. It can also tarnish the reputation of colleges and universities as pillars of learning and research essential to free thought, scientific progress and society.

We regret that colleges and universities — meant to be places of learning — have transformed into bureaucratic, highly impersonal systems held in the lurch of political debates and media sound bites. The real value of higher education comes from the personal relationships we make along the way. Our daily interactions with close friends, caring professors and invested mentors are the essence of the liberal arts experience. These moments help us learn how to think critically about complicated issues, develop strong characters and grow into our best selves. We believe that the administration's stale virtue signaling is disconnected from this process and has a relatively low impact on actual campus life.

While we acknowledge that a message from the president can help students feel supported amidst global tragedies, we urge our college administrations not to place outsized importance on a singular email. Fostering conversations among students and administrators, encouraging professors to hold productive class debates and planning events on campus is where the more powerful value of a college president's authority lies.

When you shed your contempt for the impersonal bureaucracy, you may even find warm gratitude for the administrators who run our school as they walk to work, make cameos in our music videos and support us in our education. We also encourage those who run Middlebury — members of the Senior Leadership Group, including President Laurie Patton — to make a conscious effort to engage with the student body on a day to day basis.

Come to our spaces, our events, our vigils, our performances — showing up demonstrates to us more respect than an email ever could, and it signals a key aspect of humanity that feels sorely lacking at the moment.

Reflections from The Desk

Notes from the Desk

***Libby Scaperotta** is a member of the class of 2024 and the Senior Opinions Editor for The Campus.*

At the beginning of the spring semester of 2023, I began to regret agreeing to be the fall 2023 Senior Opinions Editor.

I was overwhelmed with my coursework at the time and, as a senior Feb, felt like I was racing against the ticking clock that counted down my final days at Middlebury. The last thing I wanted to do was continue to be ghosted via email by potential op-ed writers. The responsibility of coordinating the whole section felt daunting. The job, at the time, seemed to me like a pile of anxiety that I just couldn't take on.

Yet, here I am.

I am writing this Notes from The Desk during my last week as the Senior Opinions Editor at The Campus. I write this to be published one week and two days before I move off of this campus and ski down with the class of 2023.5. I write this to say how incredibly grateful I am to have had this position, and to now have truly understood its importance.

I have read and edited op-eds I didn't agree with, and yet, my whole job was to work with writers to make their arguments as strong as possible, no matter how I felt about the content. This position has allowed me to foster opportunities for members of the Middlebury community to speak their minds, something that I consider crucial to our campus.

I used to see the Middlebury Campus as a vacuum. I didn't always understand its reach or power. I kind of thought it circulated stories within our little college bubble.

But I was so wrong.

The Middlebury Campus, and the stories it holds, not only touch all of us students, but also our parents, faculty, members of the greater community and all of their corresponding networks. The words that are expressed within the confines of this newspaper have an incredible impact, including on those with great power in our community.

Op-eds may be submitted by anyone connected to the Middlebury community — a student, administrator, faculty member, alumni or town resident. The opinions section acts as a community forum of sorts, where pertinent issues or feelings may be raised for others' consideration.

The Opinions section holds a unique role in its ability to highlight student voices. I am honored in my position to have amplified the voices of students and I don't think this power should be taken lightly.

So, in my last moments as an editor for The Campus, I am asking you all to not underestimate the power of your voice as a student, parent, faculty or community member. Together, we all make this campus the place that it is, and we can all make it what we want it to be — but that must come through open discussion, conversation and disagreement.

I know that expressing opinions, especially via a public print and online newspaper, is nothing short of a nightmare for many, especially in today's age of constant perception and judgment online. Truly, I get it. The idea of publicly sharing my opinion sometimes brings on bouts of anxiety I never anticipated over something as silly as choosing the right synonym for "good." But, we can hold this fear while also knowing how much positive change can come from speaking your opinion, if you wish to.

You are allowed to speak your mind and you are allowed to change your mind. People change, people grow and people evolve. It is impossible to do that without first making mistakes. Creating opinions or listening to others' is a way to grow and engage with the people and world around us. Op-eds allow us to open up conversations, not end them.

It doesn't matter how big or small the topic is; your opinion is significant. An op-ed could even be about your feelings on the new red carpets of the Johnson Memorial Building or expand to a larger campus-wide issue of the need for more extensive public transportation — if it feels right, and if it fits in 800–1000 words, The Campus would love to publish something that you feel strongly about and wish to share.

So, although my fall was more hectic than I would have hoped, that ticking clock is at its end.

And this might be one of the more rewarding things that I've done in my years at Middlebury.

The Middlebury Campus

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The Middlebury Campus

Coffee and Art: Catie Raishart at Little Seed

By ACADIA KLEPEIS
Senior Arts & Culture Editor

At Little Seed Coffee Roasters, the specialty latte flavors aren't the only things that change with the seasons. Along with the shift from sweet potato pie to sugar and spice, Little Seed regularly swaps out the artwork that adorns its walls. This month, the artist in the spotlight is Catherine "Catie" Raishart.

Raishart wears many hats. While her current exhibit presents charming snapshots from around New England, the simple label of "photographer" fails to accurately describe the breadth of her work.

For starters, Raishart lives and works on the family-run Foxglove Farm in Leicester, Vt. She and her husband, who first met on a non-profit farm, specialize in flowers and maple syrup. Since 2016, the couple has also run an Airbnb on the 70-acre property for visitors seeking a peaceful forest retreat.

On top of that, Raishart homeschools her three children, aged 8, 11 and 12. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the family made the switch from homeschooling only their eldest to having all three kids learn at home.

"It's partially my philosophy to just bring them places when I have a commitment," she wrote in an email to The Campus before her interview. Her youngest child, Emmett, sipped a hot chocolate while we talked, green-blue eyes widening as he occasionally chimed in.

As a full-time farmer, mom and teacher, how does Raishart manage to add artist to that list? It's a delicate balancing act, she explained.

"You know how a balance beam is a stable structure? My life is more like a teeter totter," she said. "I try to keep the kids in the center of the teeter totter, where it's still wobbly, but mostly stable, and then art and farming on either end. You just can't do it all, but you can try to balance it in such a way that it works."

This drive for equilibrium isn't new to Raishart, however. In college, she studied philosophy.

"That was utilizing one piece of my brain really heavily and I needed an outlet, so I ended up taking a lot of art classes [and] got a minor in art," she said.

One of those art classes was focused on darkroom photography.

"What that class really taught me was you've got one chance to try to line up this picture," she said. "Now, you can take like a thousand pictures on a phone and delete all of them if you don't like any of them. That class just really helped me see things in moments."

In addition to her one-take darkroom training, Raishart maximizes efficiency by primarily using her iPhone to take photographs. That way, she never misses a moment.

While curating her current exhibit at Little Seed Coffee Roasters, Raishart began by narrowing down her collection of moments by geography. As a seventh-generation Vermonter and tenth-generation New Englander, the Northeast holds a special place in her heart. This attachment is evident in the exhibit's focus on rural landscape scenes from the region.

"I really like photographing the quiet moments," Raishart said. "All these small cozy things that otherwise we might lose sight of."

The displayed images in the coffee shop were captured across New England between 2016 and 2023.

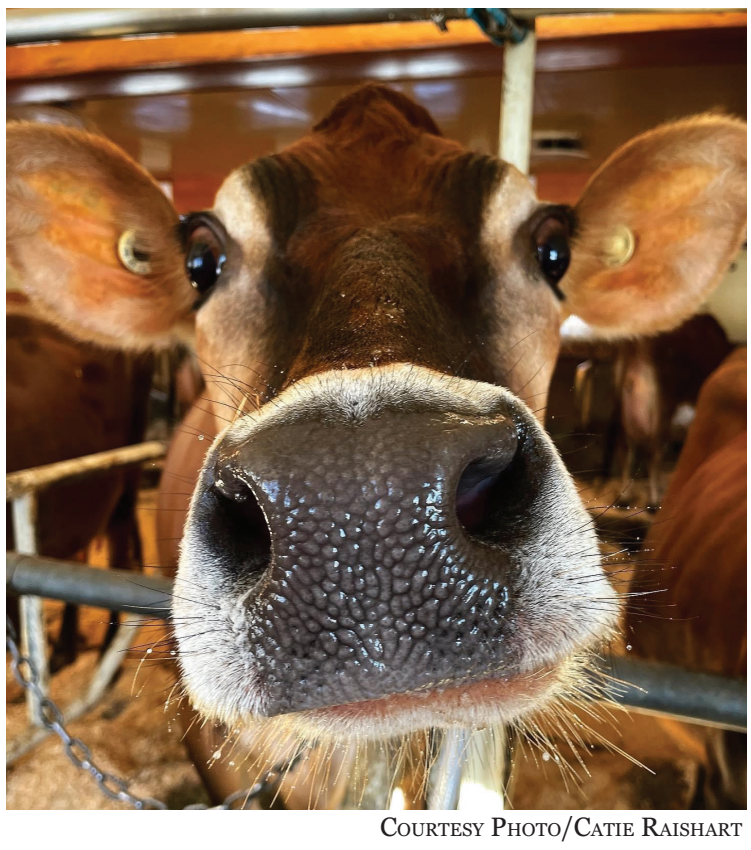
For Little Seed co-owners Anthony Gerakos and Maggie Gerakos, this choice to emphasize local artists is intentional. Since opening in 2021, the couple has used the white walls of their shop to highlight a variety of painters, photographers and mixed media artists from around Addison County.

Eagle-eyed customers can spot traces of their first exhibit with the flamboyantly vibrant Vivace (whose name, fittingly, is Italian for "lively") in a pair of brightly colored sofa cushions that are still perched on some café chairs.

"We met with [Vivace owner Sophia Manzi] before we actually opened Little Seed because we always knew that we wanted local artists to be able to hang on our walls because our walls are just a perfect canvas," Maggie Gerakos said.

Often, artists reach out to Little Seed directly about the possibility of a collaboration.

"At certain points, we've had people booked like a year in advance," Gerakos said. "There's been a lot of interest."



COURTESY PHOTO/CATIE RAISHART

"There were some [photos] that were just a total given," said Raishart. "Like I love the cow picture a lot."

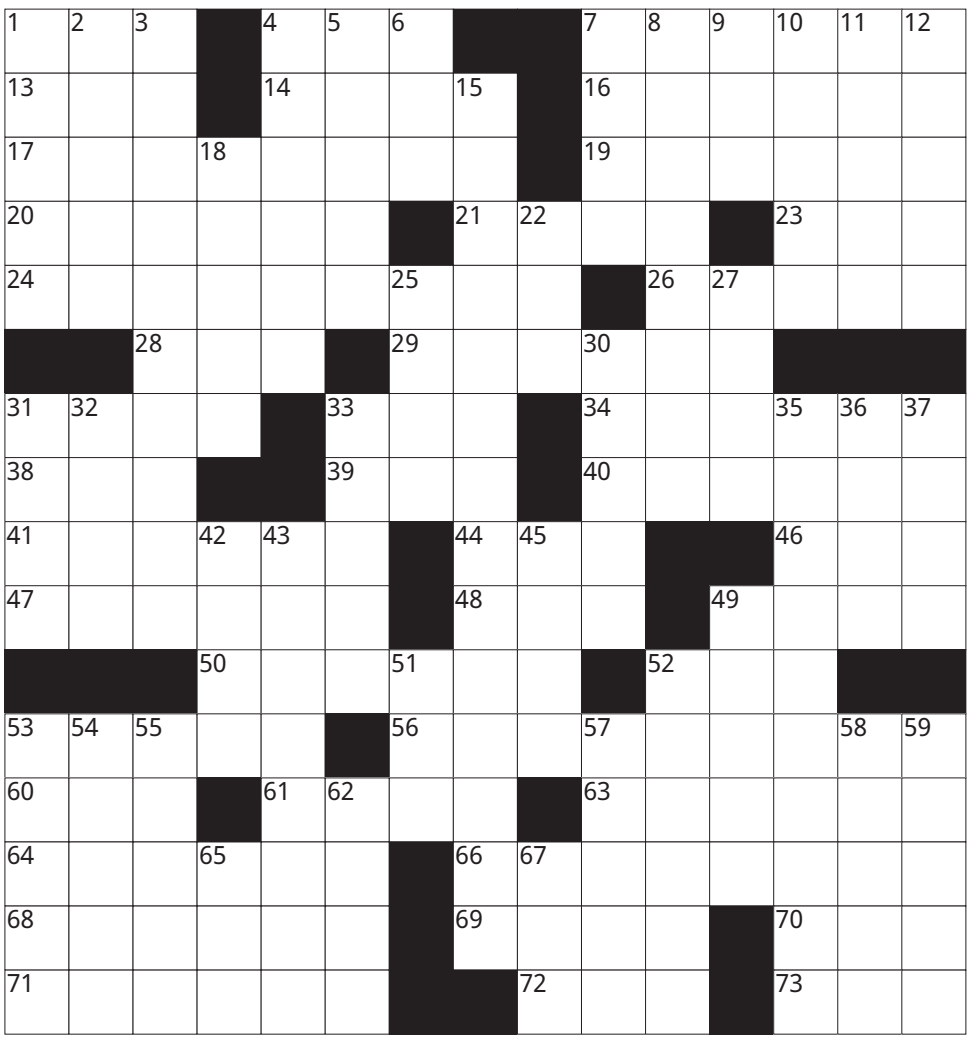
In general, exhibits last for about three months. There is no commission fee involved; Little Seed gets an aesthetic boost while local artists get a chance to present and sell their work directly to customers, making it a mutually beneficial arrangement.

Raishart's choice to contact Little Seed last summer was well-timed, as the owners had recently decided to begin an extended series featuring multiple photographers.

"For the foreseeable future, we're doing photography," Gerakos said. "We just thought it would be a fun way to reel things in a little bit and keep it to one medium."

In recent months, the series has featured photos from Greece and the United Kingdom, making Raishart's work a return to home soil. For a farmer-artist, what could be more appropriate?

Will's final crossword :(



ACROSS

1 ___ cit. (footnote abbr.)
4 Turkish title (Turkish spelling)
7 Marlon ____ who played Vito Corleone
13 * with 31-down, Feb tradition since 1987
14 The group graduating on Saturday the 3rd
16 Comparative form of eely
17 With ordinate in mathematics; the x-axis word
19 Country singer Jason
20 Plural: some have them for SAT or ACT help
21 Misplace
23 One more than bi-
24 Boards (a plane, train, boat, etc.)
26 At ___ for words
28 L,M,N,O,P,Q,...
29 Largest city in Shiawassee County, Michigan
31 Small freshwater fish
33 Actress de Armas
34 Steeped pouch in hot water
38 ___-Wan Kenobi
39 Vietnamese New Year
40 (Re)start the hand over in cards
41 Brightly colored fish family (starts with my (Will Reed) initials)
44 Portuguese "she"
46 Amateur sports organization
47 Repeating part of "Hey Jude"
48 Usually older people who are no longer working: Abbr.
49 ___ Helens, Wash.
50 Write (something, typically music) in notation
52 Cry hard
53 Preppy clothing brand that kinda isn't in vogue anymore tbh
56 Traveler from Venice or fun game to play in a pool
60 Letter after sigma
61 Verb slang meaning to have a grudge or start one
63 Plural: one of the major credit cards
64 Key of Brahms's Symphony No. 4
66 Time off unique to Middlebury
68 Fame, high repute
69 Blair Waldorf's dream school
70 Genetic messenger
71 Ski bumps that are often man-made
72 Spanish 101 verb
73 Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Lithuania once: Abbr.

DOWN

1 Exams for future attys.
2 "That's true - however ..."
3 Catholic religious order of monks and nuns that branched off from the Benedictines (this is hard I'm sorry)
4 "This is totally new!" or "This is ____ for me!"
5 Painting surface that the painter often has to apply themselves
6 Stomach muscles
7 "I'll ___ brief as possible"
8 Freed hostage
9 Abbreviation for alderman
10 Mexican president Enrique Peña ___
11 Loved ones that are often at the beginning of a letter
12 The birds of a given region
15 Seaside sweet treat
18 Thicket
22 Tic-tac-toe win
25 ___ of the above
27 Laundry unit
30 A plan, informally
31 Opposite of up
32 Start of a magician's spell
33 Really bothered
35 Vocal percussionists
36 Small batteries
37 Oversupply or the first few letters of what Celiacs can't have
42 Levelheaded
43 Ski hill near Breadloaf
45 Spanish verb for "to read"
49 Sulky person
51 ___ Zion Church
52 Melancholy, gloomy
53 The semester we are in rn at Middlebury!
54 Small role for a big star in a movie or TV show or what George Santos was offering last month
55 Bitterly regret gerrund
57 The "C" of CNN
58 Tilts
59 Schindler of "Schindler's List"
62 Sea eagles
65 Camp ___, stadium home of La Liga's Barcelona
67 ___ in elephant, ___ in eggplant

MIDDLEBURY ON BROADWAY!

By GUS MORILL
Contributing Writer

In stark contrast to the frozen scene outdoors, Robison Concert Hall was warm and bright on Saturday, Jan. 20, packed with students and theater fans alike gathered for the first ever "Middlebury on Broadway!" performance put on by ten students from Middlebury's Music Department.

Broadway's 158 years of productions have included an abundance of cherished musicals such as "Wicked," "The Phantom of the Opera," "Sweeney Todd" and "The Lion King." These shows propelled talented actors to stardom and have given the world many timeless musical numbers. "Middlebury on Broadway!" sought to pay its respects to this illustrious legacy of performing arts, and it did just that in spectacular style on Saturday night.

Whether viewers came as die-hard Broadway fans or friends of the performers, they were not disappointed.

A total of 22 songs were performed that night, from a mix of well-known and more under-the-radar plays. Among the notable performances was Kai Fukada '23.5, who sang "Temporarily Lost" from The Bridges of Madison County. The song is from the perspective of a photographer who wonders if there is a connection between him and a woman he meets one night. Fukada's voice invoked a certain elegance as he sang this musing ballad.

A second song from the same musical called "Wondering" was performed by Urian Vasquez '25. This number was made distinct with Vasquez's superb extended notes throughout the song.

Similarly poignant was Acadia Klepeis '24's rendition of "Some Things Are Meant to Be" from Little Women, a song about the dying Beth trying to comfort her sister Jo. Klepeis mastered the heartfelt tune, brightening its tragic context.

"Everybody Loves Louis" from Sunday in the Park with George was brought to life by Brianna Beach '23.5. In the song, the protagonist Dot bemoans her old love interest and sings to him about the new love she has found. Beach's performance carried an energy that conveyed perfectly the joy of this new start for the character.

Another similarly upbeat song was the fast-paced "If You Hadn't But You Did" from Two on the Aisle, which Annabelle Iredale '23.5 sang from the perspective of a singer getting revenge on a romantic interest who has wronged her.

Amidst this night of impressive vocal performances, Catherine Kish's delivery of "She Used to be Mine" from Waitress was a highlight. The waitress, Jenna, expresses her sorrow due to her life falling apart in this musical. Kish's vocal performance was captivating as she expressed the emotional turmoil of the down-on-her-luck waitress.

The event was well received by those in attendance. "I thought that the various selections encapsulated lots of the diverse music of broadway. Whether it was Sondheim, Lin Manuel Miranda, or

Jason Robert Brown, each performer brought a unique energy to their pieces that was compelling to watch," Dani Prohaska '27 said. "It's events like these that truly show the talent and passion in the Middlbury music department."

The final performance was a four-part rendition of "First Burn," the original version of the song "Burn" from "Hamilton." Beach, Iredale, Kish and Mader's distinct voices brought the heartbreak of the song to life in a wonderful conclusion to the night.

This performance served as the last at Middlebury for a few of the featured singers. For those graduating, "Middlebury on Broadway!" was a beautiful send-off in a night that highlighted each singer's individual ability and personality.

Editors' Note: Acadia Klepeis '24 is the Senior Arts & Culture Editor for The Campus.

COURTESY PHOTO / CAROL CHRISTENSEN
Voice instructor Carol Christensen was inspired by the musical "A Chorus Line" when staging this photo.

Takács Quartet impresses listeners of all ages

By CHARLIE DEICHMAN-CASWELL
Photo Editor

The arrival of the Takács Quartet, heralded by The New York Times as "one of the world's greatest string quartets," has been highly anticipated since the group's genre-bending performance as a part of the Middlebury Performing Arts Series nearly two years ago. The group made its return to campus with two performances at the Mahaney Arts Center, on Friday, Jan. 19 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, Jan. 21 at 2 p.m.

The group's 28th appearance on campus since 1994, last weekend's program consisted of the entire Bartók string quartet cycle, with quartets one, three and five being played on Friday and quartets two, four and six on Sunday. These six pieces are among the most highly regarded twentieth-century chamber music compositions.

As the audience took their seats for the second performance on Sunday, the mid-afternoon sun beamed through tall triangular windows, painting the walls with soft light. Without preamble, the quartet members entered, took their seats and began.

The first of the afternoon's three string quartets, Béla Bartók's Quartet No. 2, takes inspiration from early-19th-century Hungarian folk music and serves as an exploration of the transmission of peasant tunes from Central Europe and North Africa into modern music. Originally composed in Budapest between 1915 and 1917, the piece's folk-inspired atmospheric elements set a benchmark by which the rest of Bartók's work is contextualized. The Takács Quartet fiddled furiously, playing for 90 minutes with an animation, vigor and spirited precision that brought to life a piece of Hungarian folk history within the walls of Robison Hall.

After the din of applause had died down, the musicians retook their seats, bows at the ready. Composed a decade after his second, Bartók's Quartet No. 4 is a five-movement amalgamation of the artist's years of field research. The piece consisted of a slow, tender movement, sorrowful and sweet, bookended by hasty, lively allegro. Like any good recipe, these powerful symphonic ingredients are interwoven through a binding agent in the form of two folk-driven scherzos.

Quartet No. 4, at times cacophonous, at times delicate, was a spellbinding highlight of the performance. The musicians, spritely and wild, did more than play, infusing the music with character and soul. At moments the Takács' work bordered on comedy, their expressive postures and swaying limbs conveying both the lightheartedness and the drama of Bartók's work.

Founded in 1975, the Takács Quartet is the child of four students at Budapest's Franz Liszt Academy. Of the four founding members, the cellist András Fejér, 68, is the final musician who remains in the group today, in the quartet's 49th year of performance. This weekend, Fejér was accompanied by Richard O'Neill on viola, and Edward Dusinberre and Harumi Rhodes on violin.

The quartet has won numerous awards over the years, including a Grammy, four Gramophone Awards, a Presto Music Recording of the Year Award and three Japanese Record Academy Awards. The group is also the first string quartet to be awarded the Wigmore Hall Medal and be inducted into Gramophone's Hall of Fame.

"I was overwhelmed," remarked one community member in the audience."You felt that they physically felt the music."

As the setting sun began to cascade through the stained windows, the warm spotlight gained an intensity that added to the production of the Takács Quartet's performance. Each quartet was received by the audience with enthusiastic applause and standing ovations.

For their final piece of the afternoon, the musicians performed Bartók's Quartet No. 6. Composed in Switzerland as a mostly autobiographical reaction to the deterioration of life in Eastern Europe following the onset of World War II and completed shortly after the death of his mother, the piece is widely regarded as the composer's most celebrated. The composition is intense, becoming progressively slower and more melancholic with each successive movement.

The audience, a mix of young ears and gray-haired listeners, sat enraptured by the group's tender notes and weeping strings. There was a brief silence before the audience roared their approval, and the performance was over.

Before leaving the stage, Dusinberre gave a parting message to the Robinson Hall audience.

"Chamber music is all about relationships," Dusinberre explained. "Not just between the musicians but also with the audience."

HILLARY GERARDI '09 WINS STRAVA AWARD FOR RECORD-BREAKING CLIMB OF MONT BLANC

Continued from Page 1

SEB-MONTAZ ROSSET / COURTESY PHOTO

Hillary Gerardi '09 conquered Mont Blanc Ascent last June, setting a record-breaking pace.

Gerardi. Climbing and descending one of the world's highest mountains requires meticulous strategy on top of incredible mental and physical strength. In addition, the ascent of Mont Blanc has multiple passable routes that are constantly shifting depending on snowfall and glacial movement.

One section of the glacier, called the Junction, is a particularly challenging portion that becomes nearly impossible to traverse at speed if there isn't enough snow. A complex web of seracs and crevasses, the Junction did not see enough snow in 2021 and 2022 for a speed record attempt to be possible. Despite an inauspicious start to 2023, the mountain finally saw enough snowfall in April and May to make Gerardi's record-breaking attempt possible.

"The conditions did make me wonder about the impact of climate change on these kinds of records," Gerardi told The Campus. "At some point, the glacier might not even be passable there at all."

The day of the ascent, Gerardi assembled an all-women team to guide her climb. First, former professional Nordic skier Valentine Fabre met Gerardi at the base of the foot of the mountain's glaciers to hand off her mountaineering gear and accompany her on the early slopes of the glacier. On the descent, fellow trail runner Meg Mackenzie paced her on the run down into the town center of Chamonix.

"I am really lucky to have these really strong and motivated women in my entourage," Gerardi said. "Everyone who helped out lives here in the [Chamonix] valley."

Gerardi is far from a stranger to the spotlight. The runner had previously established herself as a major player in extreme endurance sports by winning the 2021 Marathon du Mont Blanc 90K and setting the first speed record on the Haute Route, which connects the mountain towns of Chamonix and Zermatt via ski routes. Gerardi's Mont Blanc record was not an exception, but rather the newest line on an already gleaming resumé of extreme endurance feats.

While her arsenal of endurance sports knows no bounds, Gerardi's primary sport is a form of running known as skyrunning. The sport takes place on trails, but the extreme nature of it differentiates the level of competition from other trail running events. To meet the qualifications of a skyrunning event, the track must rise over 2000 meters in altitude and include inclines of more than a 30% grade, according to the International Skyrunning Federation.

"If at some point you don't need to use your hands to scramble on something, it's probably not a sky race," Gerardi said.

Running was not always in Gerardi's blood. While it is nearly impossible to detach her name from the sport today, her days at Middlebury were rarely marked with runs. Even after her first brush with trail running, when she won the Great Adirondack Trail Run a year after her graduation, Gerardi still wasn't sold on the sport.

"I thought for a long time that I hated running because I thought it just meant running down a road," Gerardi said. "Even after my first race, I just thought, 'Well ok, that was fun.'"

A love of the mountains, however, has been a constant in Gerardi's life. The Vermont native grew up in St. Johnsbury in the Northeast Kingdom and spent her childhood exploring Vermont's landscape both on foot and on skis. An avid member of the Middlebury Mountain Club and a longtime skier, Gerardi spent her Middlebury summers in the Appalachian Mountain Club huts in New Hampshire's White Mountains. Following her subsequent relocations to Grenoble, France and ultimately to the Chamonix valley in the heart of the French Alps, Gerardi continued to explore the mountains as a researcher, hiker and skier. It wasn't until after a bad skiing accident that Gerardi switched her attention to skyrunning.

The extreme nature of the sport might appear to be anything but relaxing, but for Gerardi, scrambling up steep, rocky inclines is a cherished form of mindfulness. The intense concentration necessary for the sport allows Gerardi to equate her experience skyrunning to meditation because it forces her to be fully present in the moment.

Though she already conquered her biggest goal of 2023 at Mont Blanc, Gerardi is yet to decide her next skyrunning objective. Despite the fact that she is quickly running out of races left to win in the Chamonix region, Gerardi hopes to limit her traveling and be deliberate in the challenges she chooses.

"I don't want to fly across the world for three days just to do a race and come back," Gerardi said. "I try to reduce my carbon footprint when choosing these races, so that's part of the calculus when selecting a race."

Gerardi's record-breaking summit of Mont Blanc will be captured in an upcoming documentary to be released in 2024. The film is set to be titled "Always Alive," a clever nod to the runner's favorite alpine plant — the sempervivum, Latin for "always alive" — and to Gerardi's indomitable appetite for life.

Former Middlebury Nordic Skier Sophia Laukli wins "Final Climb" of Tour de Ski race in Val di Fiemme

By LEXI LINAFELTER
Sports Editor

On Jan. 7, 2023, former Middlebury Nordic athlete Sophia Laukli became the youngest American to win an individual cross-country World Cup race and the first to win the "Final Climb" of the Tour de Ski race in Val di Fiemme, Italy.

Laukli suited up as a Panther for the 2019–2020 season before transferring to the University of Utah to graduate as a member of the class of 2023 there. While at Middlebury, Laukli dominated the Eastern region, earning the top spot in both freestyle and classic events, playing a critical role in Middlebury's winning 3x5 relay team in the Williams Carnival, and taking four straight victories over three Carnival competitions.

She was named the Eastern Intercollegiate Ski Association (EISA) Rookie of the Year in 2020 and received her first of five career All-American recognitions that same year. While at Utah, she was a critical part of two NCAA Championship-winning teams and bagged the 2022 individual title in women's 15K freestyle.

Since her World Cup debut as a member of the U.S. Ski Team in 2021, Laukli has transitioned smoothly from her impressive NCAA career and made an excellent impression on the World Cup circuit. Most recently, she made waves by completing the seven-stage Tour de Ski: a multi-stage competition akin to the Tour de France that takes place as part of the International Ski and Snowboard Federation (FIS) Cross-Country World Cup. The race is among the most prestigious in the sport and includes a variety of individual sprints, pursuit races and mass starts, with the overall winner determined by the total points earned throughout the tour.

If the other stages of the Tour de Ski are hard, then the stage at Val di Fiemme is downright Herculean. A grueling 3.6 km climb preceded by seven kilometers of flat terrain and pitching up to grades of 28%, the "Final Climb," as it has come to be known, is the crown jewel of the race. The stage may be daunting for some, but as an honest test of cardiovascular endurance, the stage was perfect for Sophia Laukli. This was her third career start at Val Di Fiemme, undoubtedly aiding her confidence at the start of the race and her hunger to win a track that seamlessly played to her strength in uphill sections.

"I was equally nervous and pretty stressed on the start line," Laukli said. "But I think it was mostly because I was just excited to see what I could do–in the back of my mind, I knew that on a really good day, I had a chance to win the stage."

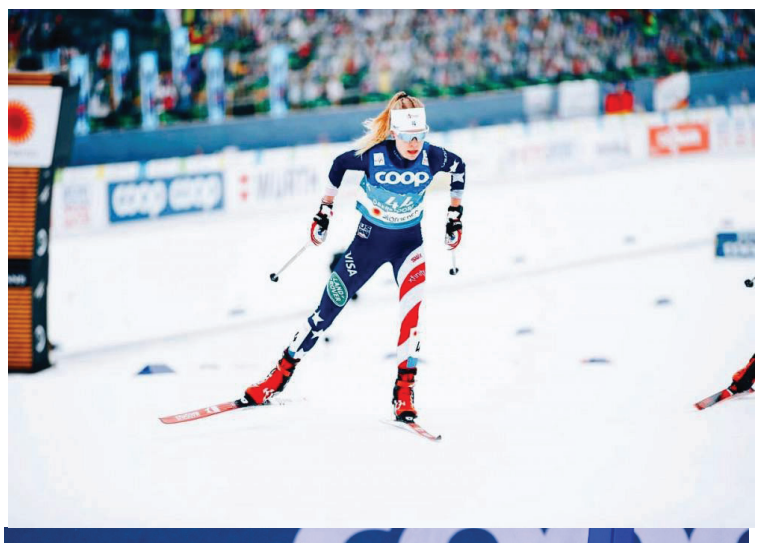
As the gap widened between Laukli and her competition in the final leg of the race, she pushed across the finish line with an unrelenting effort to find the top of the podium. Within 500 meters of the finish line, her endurance allowed her to leave Norwegian leader Heidi Weng in the dust and use the remainder of her energy to carry her toward victory.

Winning the final stage by 17.1 seconds with a time of 38:16.5, Laukli landed 14th overall in the Tour de Ski, which places her in 22nd place overall among women in the World Cup standings and third among American skiers, behind Jessie Diggins (No. 1) and Rosie Brennan (No. 3).

Laukli described the feeling of her victory, citing the first several minutes before the weight of her achievement had sunk in. "It is such a unique race and any first World Cup win takes a while to sink in, but I do know it will be one of my most memorable races," she said.

From an outstanding performance in a truly gritty event, Laukli has certainly solidified herself as a contender for top finishes in all skate and classic distance races. Going forward, she is hoping to channel this momentum gained from her first World Cup victory into a successful rest of her World Cup season, which will continue through March.

Next, the World Cup schedule will bring Laukli closer to home for competitions in Canmore, Canada and Minneapolis beginning on Feb. 9.



NORDIC FOCUS / COURTESY PHOTOS

Reflecting on four and a half years of Middlebury athletics

By BLAISE SIEFER
Staff Writer

The first Middlebury sports game I watched was on Sept. 14, 2019.

On that fall day, the football team beat Williams College 17–13 after All-NESCAC quarterback Will Jernigan '21.5 rushed into the endzone with just 30 seconds left to seal the victory.

I still remember the pregame bike ride over to Alumni Stadium with my new friends from Allen Hall. We didn't know the Middlebury team well — heck, we barely knew each other. But our excitement for our first college football game was through the roof.

Middlebury has a reputation for strong athletics.

Later that season, I was once again at Alumni Stadium when Middlebury beat Hamilton, 14–7, to win the 2019 NESCAC championship — the next week, they became the first-ever NESCAC football team to go 9–0. My friends and I stormed the field in excitement alongside President Laurie Patton and her dog, Suka.

I tell the story of Middlebury football's 2019 season to preface a larger trend: Over my four and a half years at this college, our varsity teams have been nothing shy of dominant. It has been a sportswriters' dream.

Since my first semester in fall 2019, our athletic teams have won 16 NESCAC championships, seven national championships, and one individual national title (Stan Morris, men's tennis, 2022). Field hockey (four), women's ice hockey (one) and women's lacrosse (two) have all brought home NCAA titles, with six other separate squads also winning the NESCAC.

I'll repeat: 16 NESCAC championships, seven national championships and an individual national title in four and a half years. Lest we forget, multiple athletic seasons during this time were entirely lost due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

I'll always remember the moment during spring break in 2022 as my friends and I watched women's hockey in the national championship. Gustavus Adolphus scored a game-tying goal with 0.1 seconds left to send the game into overtime, but Middlebury didn't back down. The Panthers would fire seven shots on the Gusties before an effort from Ellie Barney '22 cleared the Middlebury bench. Pandemonium.

Other notable memories include field hockey's sixth consecutive national triumph this past fall, baseball's come-from-behind victory against Hamilton in the 2022 NESCAC championship and women's lacrosse's 23–0 season last spring.

Women's hockey celebrate their 2022 national championship.

When you first visit Middlebury, it is hard to imagine that our college would be a dominant force in athletics. We're tucked in the Champlain Valley, surrounded by mountains, woods and lakes, a far cry from traditional athletic powerhouses in New York City or Los Angeles. The state of Vermont doesn't even have a single top tier professional sports team.

How our college developed, and has maintained, such an esteemed athletic reputation is beyond me. I write the following line not to preface some sort of conclusion, but rather the contrary: to leave it open ended.

What do you believe makes Middlebury athletics so unique?

Surely there's not one answer. But there is something to be said about the people that Middlebury attracts, and the culture that we've created surrounding our athletics.

Let me explain: Here are three anecdotes from my time as a sportswriter for The Campus.

I'll start with the most recent. In late November, I drove 75 miles west from my home in suburban Boston to Amherst College, to watch men's soccer face the Mammoths in the NCAA quarterfinal. It was a cold Sunday morning, right before Thanksgiving, and I wasn't expecting too big of a crowd. On the walk down to the field, I was surprised to see an entire pack of men's soccer alumni, warming up over hot cocoa before the game started.

I beat them to the sideline, and when they eventually joined me, they saw my Middlebury sweatshirt and invited me to stand with them. I don't play varsity soccer here, but I am a Panther, and that was more than enough. As I chatted with the alumni, I learned that many of them rerouted flights home for Thanksgiving to cheer on Coach Alex Elias '08 and his team. They said they wouldn't miss it for the world. No such contingency existed on the host's sideline.

Another example of Panther culture is Emeritus Dean of Advising Karl Lindholm '67. I

BLAISE SIEFER / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS
My best friends and I celebrate with kicker Carter Massengill '20 after football wins the 2019 NESCAC title. From left: Captain Rudolph '23.5, Marco Fengler '23.5, Carter, Blaise Siefer '23.5, Eli DiBari '24.

was first introduced to Karl in 2019, when Dean Scott Barnicle connected us over email. I told Scott I wanted to be a sports journalist, and he introduced me to Karl, who wrote a sports column for the Addison Independent.

Since then, Karl and I have met regularly for coffee to discuss Middlebury sports. He particularly loves baseball and basketball, and seldom misses a game. Last year, over breakfast at Shiretown, Karl outlined his plan to take a road trip to Alabama to watch the baseball team play a series of preseason games.

That's over 1,200 miles each way, in case you were counting.

Rarely do you see a Division III school with a fan of such faith. There are other Karls in this town, too, who dedicate their free time to supporting our athletic teams. Just walk into Pepin Gymnasium for a basketball game at this time of the year –– you'll see them filling the stands.

The final story I'd like to share is about PFL Weekly (Panthers for Life), the podcast that I co-founded in 2022 with three of my best friends: Marco Fengler '23.5, Captain Rudolph '23.5 and Eli DiBari '24. The podcast was a week-in-review show about Middlebury sports, and each week, we interviewed a student-athlete — or athletes — who had performed particularly well that weekend.

We recorded two seasons of PFL Weekly, from Feb. 2022 to May 2023. You can still find the show on Apple Music or Spotify.

As you can imagine, Middlebury athletes are busy people, expected to compete weekly while keeping up on schoolwork and other extracurriculars. We always sent out our interview requests on Sunday night before recording the show on Monday.

Over the course of the podcast, we probably asked about 40 athletes to be interviewed, and not a single one declined. Every Middlebury athlete we asked to speak with, regardless of their age or status on the team, enthusiastically agreed to make time to chat.

When Covid-19 restrictions loosened, we even asked athletes to come into our recording booth in the Hepburn basement, which is where we had some of our most enjoyable conversations. The athletes often showed up straight from practice. We had a blast.

It has been a pleasure writing and speaking about sports for The Middlebury Campus throughout my time here. I would've never expected to write about so many NESCAC and national championships, or so many All-American athletes.

I still struggle to comprehend how Middlebury athletics continues to raise the bar on the national level. But I do think the culture and character of our athletics is a driving force. Our off-the-field approach has on-field results.

I am overwhelmed to be graduating in just over a week, but I know I'm a Panther for life. And I'm pretty damn lucky to say that.

Sincerely,
Blaise Siefer

COURTESY PHOTO
Women's hockey celebrates their 2022 national championship victory.

Augusta Dixon '24.5 named NESCAC Player of the Week after string of victories

By JOSH ROSENSTEIN
Staff Writer

Augusta Dixon '24.5 of Middlebury women's basketball was named NESCAC player of the week on Jan. 8. Dixon earned the honor after helping the Panthers to a 3–0 week, including a pair of NESCAC wins. She averaged an impressive 12.3 points, 9.3 rebounds and 2.0 steals per game during the week.

"It's a huge honor," Dixon said, in reference to the award. "The whole team has been working hard this year and I've been working on my game a lot, so it's nice to get league-wide recognition."

Dixon put up a career high of 19 points against Hamilton College, and followed that outing with a double-double (10 points, 12 rebounds) against tenth-ranked Amherst College. Despite her terrific performances, Dixon was surprised when she read that she had been tabbed the best player in the conference for the week.

"One of my teammates texted in our team group chat, and I was definitely shocked when I first found out, but I was also very excited," Dixon said.

Dixon's impressive week was a continuation of what has been a strong season for the player so far. Dixon is ranked 18th in the NESCAC in points per game with 10.5 and leads the league in rebounds per game with a 10.2 average A weapon on both ends of the court, Dixon also ranks high in steals and blocked shots, helping the Panthers limit opponents to a league-low 50.7 points per game.

The Panthers have started the season off strong with a 12–6 overall record and a 4–1 record in NESCAC play at the time of writing. With the combination of Dixon and Alexa Mustafaj '25, the team boasts a serious dual-threat offense to complement their stout defense, which has forced a league-leading 19.4 turnovers per game.

Dixon attributes the team's success to their defensive intensity and growing chemistry over the years."We've been locked in playing championship level defense all year, which has helped us hold teams below their scoring average," she said.

WILL COSTELLO / COURTESY PHOTO
Augusta Dixon is having a stellar season, averaging 10.5 points, 10.2 rebounds and 2 assists per game.

"Spending time together has also helped. Our starting seven has been together for three years now, so that chemistry has helped build that perfect click on the court."

The Panthers face off next against Bates College at home on Friday, Jan. 26, at 7 p.m. in Pepin Gymnasium.

ALL WALKS OF LIFE *ALL FOR CEASEFIRE*

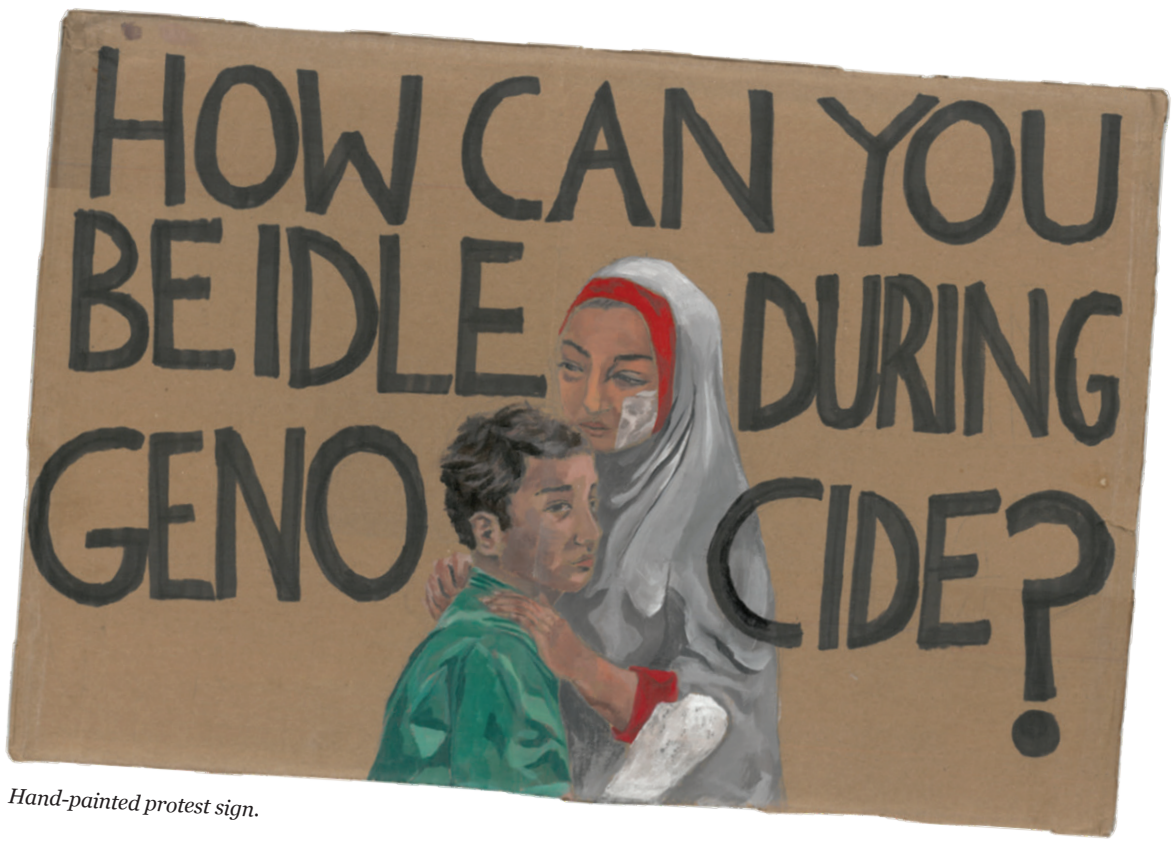
A recounting of the Jan. 13 March For Gaza in Washington D.C.

By AREN LAU, KANA DECOSTE and JUNE SU

Contributing Writers and Multimedia Editor

EVERY 10MIN A CHILD IS MURDERED IN PALESTINE
YOU CAN'T BEAT A NATION THAT KNOWS DEATH IS NOT THE END
Let Our Families Live
J.S.S.

Illustration based on real protesters. JUNE SU



Hand-painted protest sign. KANA DECOSTE

Crossing a bridge over the Chesapeake Bay on our nine hour drive from Middlebury down to Washington, D.C., our car of five turned and spotted the distinct newspaper-pattern of a keffiyeh whipping out of a neighboring car's open window. They had most likely seen our own keffiyehs as they passed by. Instantly, a connection was made between strangers all intending to confront our nation's leaders over continuing to fund Israel's genocide with our tax dollars. It was January 13th and the weekend of 100 days of war in Gaza, an anniversary marked by international protests taking place in D.C., London, Rome, Paris, Dublin, Johannesburg, South Africa, and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. We, three Middlebury first years, could not miss this momentous event despite the 500 mile distance from rural Vermont to the shining capital of the American empire.

Soon we reached the D.C., driving past crooked brick townhouses and shops, with the shining obelisk of the Washington Monument speared over the skyline. Upon entering a tunnel leading into downtown, a strangely harmonized car-horn symphony crescendoed up from traffic. Against the wall of the tunnel, young masked men were sweeping a huge Palestinian flag to and fro, pumping their fists.

Netanyahu, you can't hide! You're committing genocide!

Gaza Gaza don't you cry, Falastin will never die!

An enormous turnout of protesters, organized by the American Muslim Task Force for Palestine and associated groups, swarmed the sidewalks on the way to Freedom Plaza. Street vendors sold Palestinian flags, and women prayed on their knees outside a Macy's. By the time we got to the beginning of the route, tens of thousands had convened for the March for Gaza rally, listening to the speakers on a stage obscured by people of all generations. Lamp posts and stone steps were mounted by people wielding large flags, signs and loudspeakers, inciting chants that the crowd below echoed.

We spoke to several small groups gathered at the protest, including a trio of students from a university in New Jersey. They shared that the administration banned their Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) chapter and failed to address online hate from pro-Israel students who claimed the peaceful protesters were armed, describing them as "LOCKED AND LOADED."

Despite the dismal environment on their college campus, the three students, Wisam, Muaz and Tasha, felt that support for Palestine has been persistent and growing. "They keep saying we're gonna forget, we're gonna forget, and it's January, and this is way bigger than the first time. Way bigger, way more organized. And it's crazy. No one's lost any connection to Palestine or anything. It's beautiful," Wisam said.

Jude, a 19-year-old protester originally from Bethlehem, West Bank, expressed excitement about the massive growth of American support she has witnessed in the past year. "Two years ago you, walk up to an average American, they can't even tell you where Palestine is located. And now half the world knows what Palestine is, knows what's going on, and is standing up for my country," Jude said.

Other protestors shared their stories of resistance too. As we weaved our way towards the stage, where 2024 presidential candidate Cornel West was delivering his passionate speech, we struck up a conversation with two young men laughing with each other. With sturdy posture and confident recounting of their pro-Palestinian organizing, the pair seemed experienced. We were surprised that both protestors were only in high school. Samer, 17, recounted both victories and setbacks in his efforts.

"I run our MSA [Muslim Students' Alliance]. And we've had quite a bit of posters and events to start off fundraisers. We've raised $400 so far. The administration has been taking down certain signs without showing support, but we got the principal to take a picture with some of the signs."

When asked what motivated them, the students recounted their personal ties with Gaza. Yamin, also 17, said he witnessed multiple kids dying when he was in Palestine last summer.

"My cousin was shot, and now is paralyzed from the waist down. So that gets me more riled up to come out and support."

With a straight face, all remnants of the lightheartedness Samer and Yamin had previously exhibited disappeared.

Samer shared his own horrific experience. "A life is a life. It's not just a number lost. And I've had family for many years being killed in the occupation and being put in prison for no reason. And they're suffering for no, for no honest reason. And it triggers me because we can't do anything except come out here. But seeing all 600,000 people that are expected to come to the show out means all that it means."

Speakers such as the executive director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations Nihad Awad, former State Department official Josh Paul and several Palestinians with family lost in the conflict continued to rally the crowd. While they spoke, we met Omar, a 54-year-old Palestinian man who immigrated to the United States in 1990 after the First Intifada. Frustrated and beaten down by Israeli military occupation in the West Bank and Gaza, tensions boiled over when a car driven by Israel Defense Forces soldiers killed four Palestinians from the Jabalia Refugee Camp. Militant protests continued for three years from 1987–1990.

Omar pointed out the accessibility of the truth in this modern era of technology, referring to the widespread, real-time online documentation of what is actually going on in Gaza.

"And you don't have to be some intelligent or, or some analyst to know the truth. The truth is right there. Just you have to move and transport yourself to there and you will see all the apartheid, you will see all the injustice," Omar said.

After about an hour of standing in the windy Freedom Plaza, the mass began to move. The road was wide, and the crowd filled it from curb to curb on our 1.4 mile route to the White House. We would soon learn that over 400,000 people were there, making it the largest pro-Palestine protest in the U.S. to date.

A huge projection flashed on the side of a nearby building: a photo of Joe Biden's face complete with vampire fangs and a caption reading, GENOCIDE JOE! Boys formed a ladder-like arrangement up the Rochambeau Statue near the White House gates, jamming Palestinian flags through the openings in the bronze monument as people cheered them on. Red and green smoke funneled into the air above us. Protesters made red handprints on the sandy granite columns lining the main gate of the White House, which protesters began to shake, though did not breach.

The blocky white building sat safely behind an iron gate, a great green lawn, hedges and a giant fountain. Towering white paper-mache birds with tattered cloth wings were propped up on wooden dowels, surveying the crowd. Created by the Bread and Puppet Theater of Glover, Vt. in the Northeast Kingdom, the birds' ghost-like presence represented a mood of grief for over 25,000 people murdered since October.

Since the most recent war began, people previously unfamiliar with the issue have been engaged in the movement sweeping the globe aiming to stop the genocide of Palestinian civilians, a large percentage of whom are children. On the drive back, we discussed how our conversations with protestors who openly shared their personal ties to this war moved us deeply. The pulsing, visceral spirit of 400,000 protestors, all focused on the same cause, left us with a hope that change is coming; persistent momentum will bring the day in which the people of Palestine are able to live on their land in peace.

Protesters mount the Comte de Rochambeau. BECK ORTEN

BECK ORTEN

Passionate protesters of all ages in attendance.

The Middlebury Campus

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Middlebury holds memorial for Arianna Kamal '27

By COLE CHAUDHARI
News Editor

Arianna Kamal '27 and her parents, Teena and Rakesh Kamal, were found dead in their home in Dover, Mass. on Dec. 28, 2023.

Kamal arrived at Middlebury this fall after graduating in spring 2023 from Milton Academy, a private boarding school in Milton, Mass.

Soon after coming to campus, Kamal became a member of Women in Computer Science and MiddMyco, a foraging club on campus, as shared in an email to the Middlebury community on Dec. 29 from President Laurie Patton and Vice President of Student Affairs Smita Ruzicka. Kamal was also a new member of the Middlebury College Choir.

"In only one semester, she was meteoric in her engagement," Mark Orten, dean of spiritual and religious life told The Campus.

Around 135 people filled the chapel for a memorial gathering on Monday, Jan. 22, organized with input from Kamal's friends, family and acquaintances, Orten said. The college choir sang "When The Earth Stands Still" by Don MacDonald and "Peace I Leave With You" by Amy Beach at the memorial.

Assistant Professor of Music Danielle Simon and Assistant Professor of Education Studies Melissa Hammerle shared their remembrances. Students Arai Hardy '27, Owen Kelliher '27.5 and Anabella Georg-Hyun '27 spoke about their distinct connections to Kamal.

"Unlike when students pass away after being here for a longer period of time, her communities had not yet gotten to know each other," Orten said. "So it was really wonderful to hear how so many different disparate communities experienced her as a remarkably engaged, intelligent, stylish, funny young woman."

A Boston Globe article published on Jan. 9 remembering Kamal quoted her boyfriend, who asked his full name not be used. The boyfriend described how he and Kamal bonded by sending each other song recommendations; they stargazed and read poems together on campus this fall. The last poem they read together was "Mysteries, Yes" by Mary Oliver, which opens with the line, "Truly, we live with mysteries too marvelous to be understood," The Globe reported.

"We always talked about how we were so lucky to have met so early in college — that we had so much time together," he wrote in an email to The Boston Globe. "No one saw this coming. I am still shocked every day. Please hold your loved ones as tight as you can."

In an interview with The Campus, Hammerle spoke about the special attention and focus Kamal brought to "Mindfulness in Education" this past fall.

"As I reflect on her, she had a really strong presence, and she had a beautiful inner life to her," Hammerle said.

Shortly after students returned to campus for J-Term, Hammerle gathered with her first-year seminar students to be together in the wake of Kamal's death. For Hammerle and her students, engaging in a collaborative reminiscence was a rich activity.

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Center for Health and Wellness plans to diversify mental health resources, add new counselor following $4.9 million gift

By SUSANNA SCHATZ
Senior News Editor

SUSANNA SCHATZ/ THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Centeno House, located at 136 South Main Street, is home to Health Services and part of Counseling Services

After two student deaths during fall semester and the announcement of a $4.9 million unrestricted gift put towards mental health resources, leaders of The Campus sat down with members of health services to discuss past policies and plans going forward.

While the gift was not in direct response to the deaths on campus last semester, the decision to designate the funds to mental health programs came amidst student calls for improvements in such resources. Prior to the announcement of the donation, the college had not officially stated whether mental health services would receive any funding from its "For Every Future" campaign.

Health Services does not tend to see spikes in the utilization of mental health resources after challenging events, and this remained true this past fall semester, according to Barbara McCall, associate vice president for student health and well-being. There was no noticeable difference in demand for counseling in the three weeks before the two student deaths on campus compared to the three weeks following those incidents.

McCall emphasized that the need for diversified mental health support is important, especially amidst difficult circumstances on campus.

"What people are often looking for is connection, talking to peers, so that's the time where we really reinvest in making sure our educators know what to do, Residential Life staff know what to do and make sure that we can be out and about on campus in ways that aren't just one-on-one," McCall said.

Director of Counseling Tammy Austin added that Counseling Services were able to meet all appointment requests throughout the semester as a result of their adaptable approach to counseling.

Middlebury's counseling model is a blend of two models. One of the models, 'Flexible Care,' McCall said, focuses on near-immediate access, meaning same day or next day appointments.

Flexible care is blended with the 'Stepped Care' model.

"Stepped Care is a system of delivering and monitoring mental health treatment so that the most effective, yet least resource intensive treatment, is delivered first, only 'stepping up' to intensive / specialist services as required and depending on the level of patient distress or need," according to the Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health.

McCall emphasized that one-on-one counseling is not and should not be the only form of mental health care available to students. "One-on-one counseling is awesome and it's great for a lot of people, but it's not for everyone, so that's not the only thing we do," McCall said. "There's a ton of different entry points for mental health services."

She highlighted other resources that are available to students, including small group discussions, workshop series, health educator programs, nurse practitioner visits and integrated care specialist visits.

McCall explained the impact this gift will have on the scope of

Continued on Page 3

SPORTS

Hillary Gerardi '09 wins Strava award for record-breaking climb of Mont Blanc

By CHARLES CROUNSE
Senior Sports Editor

In the early hours of the morning on June 17, 2023, Hillary Gerardi '09 set out from the steps of the St. Michel Church in Chamonix, France. While much of the town slept, Gerardi donned an athletic vest and running shoes as she ran a straight course towards the cloudy peak of Mont Blanc, the highest mountain in the Alps. Seven hours, 25 minutes, 28 seconds and one ascent and descent of the mountain later, Gerardi had rewritten history, becoming the fastest woman ever to summit and descend Mont Blanc.

Then, in December of last year, fitness app Strava declared Gerardi's run, which spanned over 20 miles in distance and over 2.4 miles vertically, as its Activity of the Year to its 95 million registered users worldwide. After Gerardi conquered Mont Blanc's summit at more than 15,000 feet, the award launched her name to even loftier heights.

Although the final run took place entirely throughout one morning, preparation for the ascent was years in the making for

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Students turn the Snow Bowl into Mount Everest for 24 hours

By KATIE FUTTERMAN
Managing Editor

KATIE FUTTERMAN / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

The group ascends the Bowl for the final run of the 29,000 foot challenge.

Armed with Hostess Donettes, peach candies and untapped maple syrup, six Middlebury mountaineers strapped skins onto their skis and embarked on a mission to "Everest" the Snow Bowl. They set off at 12 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 22 with the goal of climbing the Snow Bowl enough times to reach 29,029 feet of elevation — Mount Everest's distance above sea level — in 24 hours. At 11:15 a.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 23, the last of the group skied down the Kelton trail, and through a finish line made up of skis and poles.

All the while, the crew raised over $2,200 for humanitarian aid in Gaza.

Diego Rey '23.5 initially got the idea for a challenge at the Snow Bowl after seeing his friend Jack Clarner '24 raise money for the Moriah Wilson Foundation through skinning laps at Jay Peak in Jay, Vt. Rey had heard of some other skiers doing an Everest challenge, and began to float the concept over the summer. Eventually, he rallied Oscar DeFrancis '24.5, Eli Richardson '24, Ryan Devine '24, Joseph Wilson '24 and Benjamin Cordola '24 to join the challenge.

By 7 p.m. on Monday, despite having already climbed 12,000 feet in elevation, morale at the Snow Bowl was high.

"It's super duper fun. What more could you want other than skiing all day and all night?" DeFrancis told The Campus as he transitioned his gear from skiing down to prepare to skin back up.

Middlebury students filled the base of the Snow Bowl — grilling hot dogs, burgers and steaks, and cheering on the skiers. It was not for nothing, as Richardson said that his hot dog with Chick-fil-A sauce was the highlight of the experience.

A number of students joined in for a few laps of skinning with the Everesters, such as Gino Abrams '24 and Maya Henning '25, who both joined Cordola for his 15th lap, and brought him a pizza to refuel. Rey emphasized his appreciation for those who came out to support the skiers.

"I was super stoked with all the people that came up to support. It was super cool to see a bunch of familiar faces out there having fun," Rey said.

Compared to the others, Cordola is a relatively new skier. He estimated it was around his 12th time skiing when he embarked on the pursuit.

"I went with them in the first lap and got dropped in the downhill because I'm not very good at skiing. So I've just been ripping this," Cordola said, referring to his preference for the Allen trail, which he ended up going up and down 34 times. He switched to the Voter trail for the last seven, which put him safely over the elevation needed to reach the Everest goal.

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New Prism Center for Queer and Trans Life set to open this spring

By LIV SANCHEZ
Staff Writer

The Prism Center for Queer and Trans Life at Middlebury is set to open this spring at the Farrell House, providing the first-ever resource center on campus specifically for LGBTQIA+ students. President Laurie Patton and Chief Diversity Officer Miguel Fernández announced the opening of the center in a message to the Middlebury community on June 28, 2021.

"The Prism Center will provide outreach, education, consultation, resources, support, programming, and advocacy services for students, staff, and faculty of all genders and sexual and romantic orientation. It will focus particularly on student empowerment and center on the experiences of queer and trans people of color," the message noted.

It also stated that the planned move-in date was the end of the fall 2021 semester; two years later, the much-anticipated Center is finally set to open next month. Covid-19 related delays in the renovation of the new space resulted in the later opening date.

Fernández credited students with providing support and initiative for the proposal to develop the Prism Center, emphasizing that they, along with faculty and staff, have advocated such a place for many years.

"The idea of an LGBTQIA+ Resource Center was primarily driven by students," he wrote in an email to The Campus. "Although the mission of the Anderson Freeman Resource Center is to support students from underrepresented groups, it was felt that a center dedicated specifically towards LGBTQIA+ issues, in particular those affecting queer students of color, was needed for programming, support, and in order to promote emotional wellness."

The new center will offer students services such as affinity spaces, one-on-one support, and products that enhance gender-affirming support, hygiene and community care, according to the Prism Center's Instagram. The renovated space will include a fully furnished kitchen, multifunctional common spaces and single stall bathrooms.

"The Prism Center for Queer and Trans Life aspires to build a just community that foregrounds critical engagement with intersectional systems of oppression," the Center's first Instagram post from Jan. 12 reads.

"There had been calls for such a center for years from students, staff, and faculty," Fernández wrote.

According to Fernández, students made a direct proposal to the administration in 2019 to explore the possibility of establishing an LGBTQIA+ center on campus. The proposal was supported by Fernández's office, the Office of Institutional Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

The office passed the proposal along to Patton, who in turn formed a committee of students, faculty and staff to work on the project. Khaim Vassar-Fontenot '23.5 was asked by Patton to join the LGBTQIA+ Resource Center Committee via email on March 3, 2020, mere days before schools began to close due to the pandemic.

Over Zoom, the committee investigated needs on campus which could be potentially addressed by such a Resource Center, researched similar programs at peer institutions, and brainstormed ideas for the Center itself and programming in line with the Office of Institutional Diversity, Equity and Inclusion's five-year goals.

"We were invited to be a part of a committee that was planning to open up a new center for queer and trans students in a place where not only those students, but essentially a space for community in general, could happen," Vassar-Fontenot told The Campus.

After completing these steps the committee made recommendations about the project to Patton.

Fernández explained that the task force concluded its investigation and presented a proposal for a new LGBTQIA+ Resource Center to the Senior Leadership Group, comprised of administrators across departments of the college, in April 2021.

Janae Due, formerly the assistant director of the Anderson Freeman Center (AFC), has been appointed to serve as the Center's inaugural director when it opens in the spring. Due currently supports and creates programming for queer and transgender students in their role, according to the AFC's website.

Vassar-Fontenot praised Due for their previous work and looks forward to seeing them take on the new position.

"I have full faith in [them], and I'm really excited to have [them] specifically fill that role. And I saw how much that [they] invested and also just how much [they] care about this demographic," he said.

Fernández also acknowledged the work of Patton on the Prism Center. He credited her with remaining dedicated to the project and even sitting in on the committee's sessions. "That does not happen often. It showed real interest and commitment on her part," he added.

KATIE FUTTERMAN / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

The new Prism Center will be located across from Adirondack Circle.

Conflict Transformation Collaborative continues to offer skills-based interdisciplinary courses this J-Term

COURTESY PHOTO

Students and faculty meet for a Conflict Transformation Experiential Learning reflection dinner at Shiretown Marketplace in October 2023.

By OLIVIA MUELLER
News Editor

The Kathryn Wasserman Davis Collaborative in Conflict Transformation initiative is offering its course "Conflict Transformation Skills" for the second year in a row this J-Term. The course provides an opportunity for students to learn and practice skills as well as access resources related to managing and transforming conflicts of different types and magnitudes. Courses that have been offered by the initiative over the past four semesters have been taught by faculty across a variety of disciplines, including mediation, Political Science, Education Studies and Dance.

"The transformation collaborative is a very exciting opportunity across the big, global Middlebury institution to infuse knowledge and skills for engaging in constructive conflict into the lives of our students," said Sarah Stroup, director of the Davis Collaborative in Conflict Transformation and professor of political science.

Middlebury as an institution already possesses a capacity for conflict analysis given the faculty who are subject matter experts in a variety of conflicts and disciplines, but what the initiative provides is a transferable skill set to take this theory into practice, according to Stroup.

"What we're able to expand with conflict transformation work is attention to the structures, resources and behaviors that help make conflicts less destructive. It's been really exciting as a political science professor to not just study war, but to think about how to build peace," she said. "We have learned from global experts in conflict management that the sorts of skills that are necessary to transform the most intractable conflicts at the highest levels are skills that we can practice right here in our interpersonal relationships."

Sascha Leidecker '24.5 took the Conflict Transformation Skills course during J-Term last year, and spoke about the value of the listening skills the class taught her. The practice of looping — repeating back what someone has said in different words to confirm your understanding — has been a tool Leidecker has found helpful in a variety of situations.

"Going out into the world right now when there's conflict everywhere and everything is so polarized, you have to have a side," Leidecker said. "If you learn the skills for just how to have a conversation, how to listen to someone who has a different opinion than you in school, you can take that anywhere outside of Middlebury."

Leidecker added that she has learned how the skill can be applied more broadly than she originally thought. "If I'm in a fight with a friend, or I'm disagreeing with my parents or with a professor or I'm trying to understand something more clearly," she said. "Making sure you're understanding the other person's perspective before you even try to engage with them and tell your own opinion."

Listening to elevate understanding is a skill Leidecker feels will be invaluable both during and beyond her time at Middlebury.

Lillian Prime '24.5 took a half-credit iteration of the course offered by the collaborative and taught by Stroup in the fall of 2023.

"The course gave students strategies to better understand many different types of conflicts ranging from interpersonal to global conflicts," Prime wrote in an email to The Campus.

Prime was then inspired to enroll in "Restorative Justice Practice and Theory" this J-Term following her experience in the conflict transformation class.

Just as their instructors come from a wide array of academic disciplines, students come to conflict transformation programming from a variety of academic backgrounds, according to Stroup.

"It's been really exciting to see the diversity of students who are enrolled in the class, from math majors to English to neuroscience to international politics and economics," Stroup said.

She emphasized that courses have been pilot efforts by the collaborative. While classes do not count for major or minor requirements, faculty adjust curriculum based on student feedback about what is valuable.

Integrating interdisciplinary offerings into the course has been key for the initiative. Stroup cited work with Visiting Assistant Professor of Dance Lida Winfield as one such opportunity.

"One of the practice opportunities that we offered this year was a workshop in the dance studio. And as a political scientist, I don't usually stand at the front of the room and think about the embodied experience in the classroom," Stroup said, adding that dance allows students to understand and experience the role of nonverbal communication in conflict experiences.

Stroup emphasized the importance of providing opportunities for repeated practice of the skills developed in conflict transformation. "New skills take time to sink in," Matt Manahan '24 wrote in an email to the Campus.

The collaborative has been intentional in gathering faculty from a variety of backgrounds and giving students opportunities to practice and learn about themselves. Stroup said that so far, mediators as well as professors of political science have taught courses on conflict transformation.

Student feedback during pilot classes has been helpful in directing curriculum development. "This is only our second year, so if there are parts of the work that we're doing that need improvement, wonderful. We just need the feedback, right? It's about what is really serving students' interests well," she said.

Stroup added that students cited awareness of their own conflict style and attention to listening have been two of the most impactful teachings of the courses.

Manahan said when he took the J-Term course last year, students took an assessment to learn their own conflict style, which helped him understand his own psychological reactions. "Knowing this has increased my self-awareness and enabled me to transform interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways," Manahan wrote.

Leidecker mentioned that a bigger emphasis on communication and public speaking would be a valuable additional focus to the course.

"After I took the class, I remember thinking we did so much on listening, and not as much as I would have liked on how you start a hard conversation. How do you say what you mean in a way that does not ostracize the person that you're talking to or make them feel uncomfortable or unsafe?" she said.

Stroup also shared her enthusiasm for the challenge of stepping away from studying individual conflicts to focus on the transferable skills that can be taught and learned. The course now incorporates multiple sessions about communication in conflict.

"I have been so pleased to have the opportunity to engage in dialogue with faculty across the college to explore how we understand and define conflict and its transformative potential in the context of our disciplines," wrote Visiting Assistant Professor of Education Melissa Hammerle in an email to The Campus.

Hammerle looks forward to teaching "Conflict Transformation: Mindfulness Skills as Educational Praxis" this coming spring.

"In my teaching, contemplative mindfulness pedagogies intersect with these domains by engaging in learning practices that explore critical self-awareness and self-reflection, connected engagement, mindful attending, perspective shifting, first-person inquiry, all held in an intersubjective learning space," she wrote. "This work has been enormously meaningful."

CENTER FOR HEALTH AND WELLNESS PLANS TO DIVERSIFY MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES, ADD NEW COUNSELOR FOLLOWING $4.9 MILLION GIFT

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services the Center for Health and Wellness is able to provide. "In the past, we've said we can help with person power and planning power, but sometimes we've been limited in terms of the actual funding to get something off the ground," McCall said. "Now we have person power and we have financial power to help."

The funding will be directed to four main areas, all intended to diversify mental health support offerings. The goals of these different areas include the addition of a licensed counselor position, stipends for the graduate intern program, increased identity-based work, and mental health promotion and prevention programming.

McCall emphasized the college's efforts to change its hiring practices in an effort to draw more diverse candidates to apply to work at Middlebury, which extends to the Center for Health and Wellness' search for an additional licensed counselor. Renee Wells, assistant vice president of education for equity and inclusion, has led trainings for Health and Wellness on hiring best practices.

The center aims to diversify its applicant pool in terms of candidates' experience, educational preparation, identity, socioeconomic background and more. "We really are trying to expand kind of where we're advertising, really looking at all elements of diversity, not just one particular identity," Austin said.

One way the hiring process aims to be more inclusive is by having first-round interviews on Zoom, rather than requiring candidates to come in person to Vermont to interview.

"Hopefully we're not only getting a New England reach, but really trying to get a national reach as well," Austin said.

Graduate interns are given an introduction to what counseling on a college campus looks like and after they complete training, they provide support and services for students on campus. While graduate interns in the Counseling department have been unpaid thus far, the gift will allow for the introduction of stipends for these positions.

"This is a really big move that we're going to be able to make toward equity and toward recognition of the work that our graduate students do to contribute on a daily basis to our community," McCall said.

She also hopes the stipends will function as an incentive for people to get involved in college health.

"We know that there's a healthcare worker shortage and Vermont has really been struggling with that," McCall added. "Our hope is that we can help people not only fall in love with college health and fall in love with the work that we do… but maybe also fall in love with Vermont while they're here for graduate school and see a path to stay."

Health and Wellness plans to host retreats, visiting counselors and workshop series that focus on identity-based work. McCall said that small-group work has been successful in the past, providing a distinct way for students to discuss mental health. She noted that discussing these topics with other students who reflect one's own identity is helpful and that students have shared positive feedback about such past programs.

Increased mental health promotion and prevention will include efforts to help students develop preventative skills.

"Our team of health educators does a lot around helping people build proactive skills. Protective factors like resiliency, help-seeking self-advocacy," McCall said.

Most colleges, including Middlebury, have taken an integrated, collaborative approach to healthcare since the 1980s, according to McCall. This method means that various health service offices collaborate to care for students instead of separating things like mental and physical healthcare.

"It's now kind of the expectation that everyone is working together," McCall said. "We try to provide lots of care options that have lots of breadth, like a lot of different services and depth that we can manage a lot of different things."

Director of Integrated Care Sarah Binshadler described that the healthcare offered by a college is dependent on the environment of the school, including the political climate of the state in which it is located and the size of the school. Because Middlebury is in a rural place, healthcare on campus aims to be more comprehensive since it is difficult for students who don't have a car to go off campus and see specialists, Binshadler explained.

In addition to providing care for students, Director of Health Services Alison Finch discussed the importance of caring for employees who are equally a part of the college community.

"The best way of taking care of students for me is to ensure that we're really taking care of our staff so that they're able to be here for students," Finch said.

Finch noted the Employee Assistance Program — which provides counseling and referrals on "quality-of-life issues" for employees and their families, according to the Middlebury Handbook — as a resource she is glad the college has as a means of supporting staff members.

"I do think that recognizing the importance of self-care and the mental well-being of the folks who are providing care is really critical for continuing to provide great care for students," she said.

All of the Health and Wellness members who spoke with The Campus noted the importance of student feedback in their work. Students can give feedback through TimelyCare, Middlebury's telehealth platform, in post-appointment surveys. The center takes the data from those surveys and uses it to make decisions about changes to their services.

Health and Wellness also sent out Healthy Minds surveys in 2018 and 2022 asking about students' mental health. In addition, they periodically look at data from The Campus' annual Zeitgeist survey, receive feedback from SGA committees and small group workshops, and get direct feedback provided by students. Last year's Zeitgeist 5.0 results showed that 39% of respondents had used counseling services at Middlebury, while 34% were very or somewhat satisfied with Counseling Services.

In 2024, Health and Wellness looks to rebuild and expand its channels for receiving student feedback. Binshadler emphasized the staff's eagerness to implement new programs and offer services students want.

"We're just people who've been doing this kind of work for a while. We have ideas and we're open and curious for new ideas," she said.

Middlebury holds memorial for Arianna Kamal '27

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"We had so many beautiful memories of the quality of her presence, how clear and quiet she was in class, and how extremely intentional she was when she spoke," she said.

As Kamal's first academic advisor at Middlebury, Hammerle bore witness to her aspirations beyond Middlebury and plans for the future.

"She wanted to be a neuroscientist, but a passion of hers was opera, and she was incredibly excited about the opportunity to travel to Italy to study and perform opera," Hammerle said.

Hammerle's final memory of Kamal is her reading at the Lessons and Carols for Advent and Christmas service where the College Choir was also performing, during which Hammerle observed Kamal's graceful presence.

"I remember her being very happy to be singing on that particular case, she was just so joyful. In all these different ways that I'm talking about, she accessed joy. And she shared it in a very quiet, deep way," she said.

Kamal's capacity for connection will be missed by the college's choir, a group for which Kamal was a prominent contributor during the fall semester.

Jeff Buettner, Christian A. Johnson professor of music and director of choral activities, shared his memory of Kamal as a singer and choral figure under his direction.

"A lot of us came to appreciate very quickly her passion for musical and interpersonal collaboration. She made fast friends among the choir and was an inspiring, captivating musician and fellow chorister," Buettner said.

For Buettner, Kamal's impulse for organizing and propelling a musical community was invigorating and inspiring.

"When I think about the fall semester, I think about how much joy I felt and could see other people feeling when we were together making music," he said. "I could always look forward to a choir rehearsal with Aria, and I could reliably count on her to be forthcoming and constructive when it came to what we were doing creatively."

Kamal's passion for and interest in opera and classical music — music that emphasizes the primacy and range of the human voice — was remarkable and a rarity, Buettner added.

"It's always kind of edifying to think that here's one among us, who really loves to sing and wants to bring that love of singing to the people around her. She would sing with all of her attention," he said.

Buettner spoke about carrying the memory of Kamal forward into future choir rehearsals and using the memory of her dedication to the group as a beacon for organizing the group's future activities.

"It's a way to emotionally navigate this tragedy in a way that is love-filled and joy-filled, and endeavoring to remember her in that way. I am going to remember what she brought to the ensemble and let it inform what I bring to the ensemble the next time I meet them."

Buettner mentioned how, in being an ensemble dedicated to the making of choral music, choirs are uniquely missioned and historically counted upon to be spaces for grieving, commemoration and remembrance.

For Buettner and for the college choir, the idea of getting together to sing in memory of Kamal was immediately present after hearing about her death.

"I think the impulse to gather and the impulse to remember Aria together is extraordinary in this case," he said.

Gregory Marcinik '25.5, a friend of Kamal's and member of the broader music community at Middlebury, spoke with The Campus about his recollections of Kamal. Like Buettner and Hammerle, Marcinik recalled Kamal's passion for music, but also remembered her as not only a musician but also a friend and a fellow student at the college.

"She was pretty funny, which a lot of people may not have known about her. She was weird in a kind of fun and quirky way, and she had a good sense of humor and really good music taste," he said.

Marcinik commented on her impressive dedication to opera music, and shared his sadness that he would never have the opportunity to see her in future music classes at Middlebury.

The college choir intends to acknowledge Kamal's death and celebrate her life in some form during their spring performance. After her time here, Kamal left an indelible impact on the friends, professors and groups with whom she spent her fall semester at Middlebury.

"She saw all the good, and all the beauty, and had a wonderful gift in that she could make you see it, too," Kamal's boyfriend told The Globe. "She truly made you feel like the only person in the world when she spoke to you, love and light just radiated from her. She could hold her own in even the most niche topics of conversation and was one of the smartest people I've ever met."

Editors' Note: Managing Editor Katie Futterman '24 contributed reporting.

Students turn the Snow Bowl into Mount Everest for 24 hours

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Many of the other skiers marveled at Cordola's ability to do the same run that many times all alone. DeFrancis said seeing him at his 16th lap on Allen was his favorite moment of the experience.

But the guys weren't smiling the whole time.

As the cold set in, Richardson and Wilson both told The Campus that it felt as though their lungs began operating at half capacity.

For DeFrancis, the hardest part was the last lap before reaching 20,000 feet of elevation.

"We hadn't really taken a significant break and I went completely non-verbal/sorta blacked out on Voter," he wrote in a message to The Campus.

Wilson described the way the exhaustion began to affect him throughout the night, saying his head began to feel weird and small. He also noticed his mental capacities slowing down, such as when he found himself putting his skinning equipment on his skis and immediately removing it by accident.

Wilson hoped a brief nap might help, but after he kept hitting the alarm, it ended up being a bit over an hour, which ultimately set him behind the others, who did not stop to sleep. When he woke up, he said, he still felt decrepit and even geriatric. Wilson eventually finished with the others at 24,300 feet, and decided not to continue the final few thousand feet.

"I was like that was a good effort, and that's a bunch of feet. I'm not gonna hang out for two hours after everyone else does. I felt a little like a weenie, but that's fine," he said.

For Devine, the pain came after about 8 hours.

"I had to stop for a little bit and eat a lot of food and try not to throw up," he said.

After that, he said did not feel like his hip could keep up with the steeper trail that most of the others were doing, so he came over to the Voter trail, and skied alone until others came over in his final hour.

KATIE FUTTERMAN / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Wilson and Richardson make the transition from skiing down to prepare to skin back up the Snow Bowl.

He finished first of the pack at around 9 a.m.

Despite a clear desire to fall asleep after finishing, Devine sat up straight in a fold-up chair and cheered on the rest of the skiers.

"Everything hurts," he said. "It was fine until I stopped moving for a while and then everything seized up."

Fortunately, the group did not end up needing assistance from Charlie Kauffman '23.5, who slept in the ski patrol hut all night in case anyone needed emergency medical first response. There were also several other patrollers throughout the day who were able to provide aid if necessary, Kauffman told The Campus.

"We all kept on our nutrition pretty well, which I think was huge to not bonking super hard. All of our bodies held up as well as could be expected," Rey said.

The promise of the finish line — or more specifically, a bacon egg and cheese for Wilson — kept the men fighting.

"My favorite part was right before sunrise when I finally believed I was capable of finishing for the first time," Richardson added.

Not to fear if you missed a viewing in person, because Malick Thiam '24 and George Madison '26 were with the skiers all throughout the night filming, with some help from Jake Gilbert '24 in the afternoon and morning.

"I've always wanted to film some kind of endurance event. So I quickly got invested," Thiam said.

Thiam and Madison skinned up and skied down filming several times throughout the 24 hours, with only a brief nap in the lodge from around 2 a.m. to 4 a.m. As the men skied down to the finish, Thiam sent a drone and mounted his camera. He and Madison plan to create a short documentary about the pursuit and hold a premiere for the event.

With mangled feet and sore bodies, the group looks forward to a long overdue rest.

"I'm super stoked to be done with it," Rey joked.